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Psychodynamic Problems of Adaptation

— MacKenzie Delta Eskimos

By J. M. Lubart

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**PSYCHODYNAMIC PROBLEMS OF ADAPTATION - MACKENZIE DELTA ESKIMOS
A PRELIMINARY STUDY**

by

Joseph M. Lubart, M.D.

This report is based on research carried out while the author was employed by the Northern Co-ordination and Research Centre, now the Northern Science Research Group of the Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development. It is reproduced here as a contribution to our knowledge of the North. The opinions expressed, however, are those of the author and not necessarily those of the Department.

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Northern Science Research Group
Department of Indian Affairs and Northern Development,
Ottawa, December 1969.

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Ottawa, 1970

Cat. No.: R72-6170

ABSTRACT

Some psychological problems of adaptation to a changing environment are viewed in the light of certain character and personality traits common among Eskimos. Emphasis is on the difficulties experienced by young Eskimo men and women in the town settings of Inuvik and Aklavik. The young women tend to reject Eskimo cultural values and aspire to Euro-Canadian lifeways. In so doing, they also tend to reject Eskimo men and aspire to marriage with whites. Often unable to compete effectively with white men either for women or for jobs, Eskimo men may experience a sense of failure, frustration, and rage, their emotional disturbance finding expression in excessive drinking, violence, and other forms of deviance.

FOREWORD

The Mackenzie Delta Research Project is an attempt to describe and analyze the social and economic factors related to development in the Mackenzie Delta. Particular emphasis is being directed toward the participation of the native people of the area, and the extent to which they are making effective adjustments to changes brought about by government and commercial expansion in the north.

The field work for this report (MDRP-7) was undertaken by Dr. Lubart in the summer of 1966. Originally, it was anticipated that publication would take place some time in 1967, and a first draft was in fact prepared in that year. Unfortunately, owing to unforeseen delays and the pressure of other commitments on both the author and the editors, work on the final draft was not completed until 1969.

Of course, there have been changes in the Mackenzie Delta in the time which has elapsed between field work and publication, perhaps especially in the physical characteristics of Inuvik, and to a lesser extent in the residential distribution of ethnic groups in that community. However, there is little to indicate that life has changed substantially for the people whose problems are described in this report, and its central considerations seem as relevant now as in 1966.

A. J. Kerr,
Chief,
Northern Science Research Group.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am grateful to Victor Allen and Elijah Menarik for their many kindnesses and for their invaluable information concerning Eskimo life in the Delta.

Many thanks are due to Dick Hill, Manager of the Inuvik Research Laboratory, for his advice, and for his help in arranging the details of trips into the bush.

For the opportunity to interview prisoners on a voluntary basis, which provided a wealth of vital information, I am indebted to Inspector Kenneth Smith of the RCMP, and to Corporal William Pringle for his willingly shared knowledge of the Land Eskimo, gleaned during months of personal friendship both in the Keewatin and the Mackenzie Districts.

Many thanks, finally, go to the other members of the Mackenzie Delta Research Project, particularly John R. Wolforth, Derek Smith, and Alexander Ervin for their unselfish sharing of important data, and to George F. Parsons for his patience and help in the preparation of the manuscript of this report.

Joseph M. Lubart.

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MACKENZIE DELTA



INTRODUCTION

Purpose of Study

This report is an attempt to correlate observed patterns of social disturbance among Mackenzie Delta Eskimos with factors in basic personality. Particular emphasis is placed on points of potential conflict implicit in the structure of Eskimo character. Because of long contact with the white man in this region and because of diminution in natural food supplies, the Eskimo has been undergoing for decades changes in social and economic patterns. Many of these changes are not easily reconciled with previous Eskimo character traits and traditional institutions. Change has meant many disruptions in human relations. Family cohesion and self-image have suffered. Old values and customs, coming in conflict with Euro-Canadian ways, have begun to lose their adaptive utility.

Extensive efforts are being made to develop Canada's North, and it is considered vital to incorporate the North's indigenous peoples into the general structure of Canadian society. Knowledge of how Eskimo people respond to conditions of rapid social change can be valuable in social planning, and to this end the concept of basic personality is used in the present study.

The theory of basic personality asserts that each culture provides a broad base of similarity of potential responses to stimuli, shared by all members of the society. These response potentials, mainly unconscious and hence not easily altered, are structured and conditioned by the institutionalised practices of the culture. Although there may be differences between individuals, nevertheless, there is an inventory of responses shared by all who share the culture, and it is from these fundamental patterns that basic personality is derived.

The psychological apparatus and intrapsychic mechanisms whereby man perceives and integrates his perceptions of the environment are the same for all mankind. However, human groups differ widely in the institutions which they have developed to facilitate survival and the conduct of human relations. Because individuals are conditioned to think and behave in culturally prescribed ways, the same stimulus may evoke different responses in different societies. In a situation of culture contact, these differences may give rise to misunderstanding, conflict, and alienation. This can be particularly disruptive when one of the groups in contact enjoys technological, numerical, and political superiority over the other.

In each culture there are socializing mechanisms that promote cooperation and survival. These call for renunciation or repression of various drives and reactions, and provide for the fulfillment of impulses in culturally acceptable forms. Hence, there is a price exacted for social stability in every culture, paid in the form of unconscious structured patterns of emotional conflict. The intensity of this conflict varies with the force of the sanctions, and with the magnitude of the rewards and gratifications provided for compliance with the cultural norms. In general, the greater the reward, the more controllable are the inner tensions. Because of these dissimilarities, different societies show wide variation in potentials for pleasure, for mutually comfortable human relations, for capacity to face stress, and for stability in the face of external threat.

This report assumes that when change is imposed upon a group so that traditional norms are no longer operative, the disturbances that appear will be related to conflict potentials inherent before the period of change. It is the purpose of the study to identify and describe the focal points of potential conflict, in the hope that disruption can be minimized.

Method and Sources of Data

An understanding of personality structure in a significant number of individuals will reveal much information about the culture of the group to which they belong. Pursuing this idea, material was gathered through personal contact with a variety of Eskimo people during several periods of research. Field work included a summer spent in Ottawa with a group of young men and women from the Eastern Arctic, another summer at Baker Lake and outlying camps in the Central Keewatin, and a summer in the Mackenzie Delta spent principally at Inuvik and Aklavik, but also at the Reindeer Station and in outlying camps.

Aside from general observations of behaviour, about 60 depth interviews were obtained in serial sessions. Together with many less formal interviews and spontaneous discussions, these provided life histories and furnished a great deal of material for psychoanalytic interpretation. The people interviewed were of varied ages and backgrounds and included young men and women living in the towns, as well as older people living on the land. They included some who were relatively successful and capable of adapting to the changes around them, and others who showed varying degrees of maladjustment and emotional disturbance.

Background information about local conditions, problems, and customs was obtained from a number of knowledgeable Eskimo informants, from whites in official positions, from other researchers, and from published sources. Social practices surviving from the land culture were observed in Keewatin and among older Eskimo residents of the Mackenzie Delta, and these observations were incorporated in the analysis. Of course, relevant anthropological literature also was studied. In particular, the literature dealing with folklore and religion provided knowledge of projected attitudes and images of unconscious origin relating to reactions to child rearing, patterns of parental behaviour, and a variety of emotional and motivational constellations.

Care has been taken to preserve the anonymity of informants and of individuals observed. To this end, definitive biographies have been withheld, case histories abbreviated, and identities disguised, while attempting at the same time to present as much data as possible in support of our conclusions and interpretations.

CHAPTER I

THE SETTING

General Description

Since the intrusion of the commercial whaling industry eighty years ago, the Mackenzie Delta has been the setting for almost continuous social, economic, and demographic change. The processes of change have been greatly accelerated in recent years, and increasingly the native peoples have moved away from the land and into the settlements, growing ever less dependent upon hunting and trapping¹. This transition to town life, particularly at Inuvik, has not been made without cost; it has served to create or intensify social and psychological tensions and strains from which many of the Delta people were relatively protected in the days before urbanization.

Until the late 1950's, the chief settlement of the region was Aklavik, situated on the west side of the Delta. At that time, however, the government decided to build the new town of Inuvik on the east side of the Delta, 35 miles from Aklavik by air and 70 miles by boat. The decision was made primarily for engineering reasons, including the need for an adequate site for construction of an airstrip, and for the expansion of health and educational facilities.

A modern, well-staffed hospital was established as well as a combined elementary and high school for native and white children. Pupils are flown to Inuvik from settlements as far as 1,000 miles to the east to live in either a Catholic or Anglican hostel for about ten months of the year, out of contact with their parents².

About 1,300 white personnel from the south live in the area, mainly in Inuvik. These include administrative, hospital, and school staffs, and a variety of technicians employed in building construction and maintenance, and in operating the town's power station. In addition to those agencies providing health, welfare, and educational services, the many government establishments at Inuvik include an R.C.M.P. detachment, a Department of Transport station, and a base operated by the Canadian Armed Forces.

For the white members of the community there is comfortable housing in the so-called Serviced Area, which includes a utilidor system for providing hot and cold water, heat, and sewage disposal. The houses of the native people, although larger and better constructed than their houses on the land, are separated from the serviced area and do not have its facilities³. This division of the town into two distinct sections with services of unequal quality has caused a great deal of controversy locally.

¹ The history of change in the Delta is well documented. For a concise, but reasonably detailed historical sketch see Wolforth (1967).

² While the study of children as a group and of the school system are not essential parts of this report, some reference will be made later to certain observations about Eskimo children from the land and from the town. The consequences of an educational program fashioned after that of the Province of Alberta for children who have had no exposure to life in the south, would be a study itself. The separation of hostel children according to their religious affiliations also could provide material for future study.

³ Since this report was written, the utilidor system has been extended through a part of the area occupied by native families.

Investment of private capital has been limited, and the economy of the community is largely dependent on government spending. While some jobs are available in the private sector, government remains the principal employer of the native people. With some exceptions, jobs tend to be unskilled and largely seasonal, the period of highest employment being in summer when construction, shipping, and other activities are at their peak. During the long winter there is relatively little work to be had.

Owing to increase of population, food shortages on the land, and lack of job opportunities, Inuvik and Aklavik have become centres of welfare housing and financial support for a large number of families. The government is seeking ways to exploit the natural resources of the Delta region, hopefully to provide a viable economic base in future. Meanwhile, people must be fed, housed, and provided medical care. The risk, of course, of the development of a "welfare psychology" is strong; indeed, in some ways it is already apparent.

The Population

As already indicated, this study is concerned with Delta residents of Eskimo culture and ancestry. The Indian and Metis populations are not considered because the author is less familiar with those aspects of their history and culture which might be expected to have a significant bearing on the findings.

Having said this, it must be pointed out that there are few people of pure Eskimo ancestry in the region, most of them having some mixture of white or Indian heritage. A few even have unmistakeable Fijian or Samoan characteristics, stemming from ancestral contacts with some of the early whaling crews.

However, even those with little Eskimo background genetically tend to be Eskimos culturally; they identify themselves as Eskimos and conform to Eskimo values and behaviour patterns. This is perhaps made easier by the fact that, at least on the surface of things, patterns of Eskimo culture resemble those of other native groups in the Delta in many ways. No major lines of social cleavage are apparent between the native ethnic groups, and in general relations between Indians and Eskimos are fairly harmonious.

The following table shows the distribution of population in 1965, by ethnic groups, in those Delta settlements where Eskimos reside. Approximately 150 Eskimos, including perhaps 30 adult male hunters and trappers, derive their living mainly or exclusively from the natural products of the land. They rely heavily on the sale of furs, a commodity subject to the vagaries of ecological cycles of fertility and supply, and to even more capricious fluctuations in market value.

**Population Distribution by Ethnic Groups
in Three Delta Settlements, 1965**

	White	Metis	Eskimo	Indian	Total
Inuvik*	1376	—	646	245	2290
Hostels	(102)	—	(270)	(114)	(486)
Aklavik	105	134	277	158	674
Reindeer Station	9	—	60	—	69

*Includes children in hostels. (Source: Smith, 1968:10).

Inter-Ethnic Relations and the Attitudes of Whites

Anthropologists frequently have noted the existence of social stratification along ethnic lines in the Mackenzie Delta and elsewhere in the north, the principal line of differentiation being between whites on the one hand and natives, whether Eskimo, Indian or Metis, on the other. The present study adopts a perspective somewhat different from that of anthropology, and hopes to supplement existing anthropological data on class differentiation with some psychologically significant material. In particular, data will be presented which suggest that many Eskimos are beginning to entertain derogatory self-perceptions, viewing themselves and other Eskimos as being inferior to whites. These findings seem most significant when viewed in the light of their possible deleterious effects on Eskimos, particularly on the emotional stability of individuals.

It is reasonable to hypothesize that patterns of self-perception in members of a subordinate group stem in part from the attitudes toward them held by members of the dominant group, and from experiences gained while interacting across group lines. This notion forms the basis of the discussion which follows.

No special distribution of attitudes was noted correlative with social, professional or vocational groupings among the whites. Indeed, in a good many instances surprisingly rigid attitudes were encountered in some people whose educational background might have led one to expect the contrary. On the other hand, tolerant and egalitarian feelings were at times noted in less educated workers, including some who were transients, there for a few years of work at high wages and with no particular loyalty to or emotional connection with the region.

In many instances, perhaps in most, there were apparent contradictions between verbal and behavioural expressions concerning natives. The great majority of people observed, whether by direct interview or in the course of frequent personal association, presented themselves as liberal minded and tolerant of native ways and behaviour. Very few admitted to open feelings of distaste or prejudice, although such attitudes were apparent in some cases.

Very few whites have either professional or experiential awareness or knowledge of the classical native cultures, and attitudes toward natives run a wide gamut from sympathy and respect to bigotry and contempt. In their sexual contacts with native girls, the attitudes of some white males might best be described as exploitative; these men are not necessarily in the lowest socio-economic strata.

By and large, administrative personnel are concerned with the economic and social problems of the natives and are conscientious in their efforts to deal with them. This, however, is their job, but it does not follow that they necessarily understand the native people in terms of their feelings, conflicts and goals¹. Administrative, health service, and welfare personnel are at best kind and paternalistic; at worst, they are rather rigid in their fundamental demands that natives conform to North American values with regard to behaviour, religion, morality and work habits.

The author had the particularly informative experience of a good deal of contact with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police, and the benefit of permission to obtain biographies and psychiatric histories from prisoners who would volunteer².

¹The author has not included the education staff since most of them were out of the area on vacation during the summer.

²About 20 histories were obtained from male and female Eskimo prisoners, incarcerated mainly for drunken and disorderly behaviour, a few for more serious charges. The author indebted to Inspector Kenneth Smith for providing this source of information.

Officers of the R.C.M.P. were, by and large, correct and aloof in their relations with natives, and humane with prisoners. With one or two notable exceptions, they seemed to know little about native attitudes or cultural values. They performed their duties with dispatch and efficiency, usually arresting drunk and disorderly natives with as little force as possible. A few were more temperamental and rough in their handling of recalcitrants. "A policeman's lot is not a happy one", particularly in a community such as Inuvik where dealings with natives are exposed, noted by all, and generally decried by the non-whites. A number of R.C.M.P. officers expressed the wish for duty in less populated northern areas, where police duties tend to have relatively little to do with law enforcement.

Expressed attitudes of the R.C.M.P. are generally of the paternalistic stamp, but their implicit behaviour and feelings are similar to those of administrative people who fundamentally ask for conformity with white values.

Navy personnel generally are also correct in their behaviour with natives, but partly from fact and partly from exaggeration, the general impression in Inuvik is that much sexual activity with young or adolescent girls occurs on the part of young unmarried sailors. Whether this is true or not in comparison with males of other white groups, the young Eskimo woman, at least, considers the Navy man to be the prestige catch and the most glamorous of the white men in the region. By and large it is toward the young Navy men that the young Eskimo males direct their resentment and sense of frustration with regard to the social aspirations of Eskimo girls.

The Delicately Liberal as a Type

There is a type of white person who comes to the North with a strong liberal conscience, and perhaps a sense of guilt about the role of western civilization in its dealings with native peoples throughout the world. This person usually is well-educated and informed, and has strong feelings about democracy, egalitarianism, and the sociological problems of native peoples. He may come for permanent or long term work, often wishes to live amongst and to be accepted by natives, and stands in various instances apart from the mainstream of the white community. Indeed, he may tend to resent the white community and to consider it reactionary. He is perhaps something of a romantic in his views about life away from the world of the South and in his attitudes toward native customs and values. To a much greater degree than other whites, he is self-aware in his dealings with natives. He is well-meaning, dedicated to social ideals, capable of identifying with the feelings of others and militant about the white man's mistakes, gross or accidental, in his treatment of the natives. Included in this group may be various research investigators in the behavioural sciences.

These "dedicated" people may have a strong impact on Eskimos with whom they come in contact, an impact often confusing and sometimes deleterious. This in no way implies that the well-meaning worker should abandon his efforts, but it does strongly suggest that there be no illusions about the possible consequences of his behaviour, particularly if he is not alert to the meaning and significance of his interactions with native people. Lack of such awareness may involve him in acting out his own conflicts or needs, totally to the disadvantage of the people with whom he is working.

It should be added that liberal and humanitarian attitudes and informed self-awareness may not always be essential to effective work with native people. In fact, several individuals at Inuvik whose jobs involved the training of Eskimo workers appeared to lack these qualities. Nevertheless, they seemed to give much to their employees by way of training, productive work and hence, self-respect.

Other Features of Inter-Ethnic Relations

White attitudes, then, run a wide gamut, including some features conducive to ultimate integration, and others which are disruptive or divisive. Quite apart from the question of attitudes, the most outstanding contribution to a sense of division is certainly the open and obvious separation of the town of Inuvik into white and native sections, with whites having the prerogative to live in the unserved portion if they wish (and some do), while Eskimos and Indians have no such freedom of choice regardless of the esteem in which they may be held in both communities.

It seems significant that the Anglican and Roman Catholic churches are located in the serviced area, while the only other church, the Pentecostal, has its meeting place in the unserved area. It is my opinion that in Inuvik and elsewhere, Eskimos of the Pentecostal faith have much greater allegiance to their church than do Eskimos of the Catholic and Anglican faiths to theirs. In short, it seems that the Pentecostal pastor "reaches" his flock more effectively than do his Catholic and Anglican counterparts. These differences seem worthy of future research, since they may have important implications for the study of Eskimo character structure, and for the understanding of communications between Eskimos and whites.

By and large, social mixing between white and native adults is rather limited, much of it taking place in the context of voluntary associations. However, it seems that few native people are really active or involved in formal community organizations. This is not due to exclusion by the whites, but rather to reticence, inexperience, and passive resistance on the part of Eskimos and Indians themselves.

Among young adults, considerable mixing was observed during the summer in the very active baseball league games. Many teams, especially women's teams, had mixed white and native players. However, several of the teams represented different local government bodies and these players were all whites. Spectators were, of course, not officially divided in the grandstands, but natives tended to group among themselves, as, indeed, did the whites. My impression was, nevertheless, that it was in this sport that the greatest amount of mixing occurred, likely because of the relative ease of communication in the performance of a common activity, and a sense of mutuality which could not easily occur many other levels.

Membership in a baseball team may furnish a new dimension to the young native woman's perception of the role of women in western society. The female baseball players wear uniforms virtually identical to those worn by male players. On the field, they attempt to perform like males in all respects, even to the point of shouting exhortations to fellow players, in the manner customary in the South. Participating in this activity, seeing her white team mates performing in this way, the native girl is exposed to something of the patterns of the wider North American culture, wherein there is strong identification of the female with male activities. She perceives that it is possible for a female to assume male roles. In a culture where roles are sharply differentiated according to sex, this realization may have far-reaching consequences for female self-perceptions and behaviour patterns, and for the future structure of male-female relations.

CHAPTER II

PATTERNS OF EMOTIONAL DISTURBANCE

Indications of Conflict

This chapter examines certain manifestations of emotional conflict and disturbance observed among significant numbers of Eskimos in the Mackenzie Delta. Such conflict exhibits distinct and recognizable patterns, resembling in many ways those found in other societies. However, we propose to demonstrate in a later chapter that in the Mackenzie Delta region, the form, content, and distribution of these conflict patterns are consistent with various aspects of Eskimo basic personality, when suffering exposure to rapid, widespread, and dramatic social change.

No attempt will be made here to deal with specific psychiatric syndromes, such as structured neuroses and psychoses, since such data would require a separate report. Rather will the discussion attempt to delineate and emphasize evidences of characterological pathology involving confusion of roles and goals, of identity, and of modes of coping with anxiety and depression.

If the conflict patterns outlined in this section can be demonstrated to be consistent with underlying points of tension implicit in Eskimo character in spite of the overlay of the new culture, then this report might provide some insights for predicting modes of emotional conflict to be expected as the values and institutions of the old culture lose their relevance. Such a frame of reference could be of assistance in social planning.

In general, and especially from the point of view of a psychiatric observer, the patterns of aberrance to be stressed include drinking habits and motives; sexual behaviour; incipient or overt acting out of aggressive impulses; feelings of inferiority; conflict between the sexes; role and self-image disturbances; consequences of permissive child rearing, both pro and con; and the ubiquity of incipient severe anxiety and depression. Variations are to be noted with respect to a number of factors, including age; sex; degree of white ancestry in some instances; source of subsistence (whether land, job, or welfare); aspirations and preferred life style (whether for town dwelling or life on the land); religious affiliation; educational achievement and occupational skills.

Drinking and Sexual Behaviour

Drinking to the point of marked alteration of mood and level of consciousness and loss of control, particularly of aggressive impulses, constitutes one of the gravest overt signs of social pathology observed in the Delta Eskimos. Such excesses of alcoholic intake were observed to a high degree in all age groups of both sexes, except for children, and indeed, on several occasions, in Inuvik, late in Summer, when the nights were darker, I observed boys from 13 to 16 wandering and cavorting as drunk as any of their elders. The beer parlor, frequented mostly by natives, and known by the culturally pejorative title of "The Zoo", is the center of perhaps the most frenetic drinking I have ever seen in any social group anywhere. The amounts consumed privately, both of beer and home brew, less of the more expensive whiskys, are certainly at least as high as those drunk in the beer parlor.

In only a few instances did I observe light, convivial, perprandial drinking, this being among a few more educated Eskimos with higher job or social status in the total community, some having had the experience of long residence in the South. Even in several of these instances there was a tendency toward excessive drinking.

Generally speaking, drinking was begun with the express purpose of getting drunk, deliberately and in anticipation of the euphoric state that would ensue. In many instances the pattern would start among groups who were friends and would progress to the point of hilarity, great excitement, expenditure of a great deal of money, confusion, and finally stupor.

Most Eskimos tended to become expansive, euphoric, somewhat boastful, and quite friendly when drunk. In such instances men would frequently stand everyone to drinks, whoever having money being expected to spend it and doing so, typically, with great abandon and thoroughness. None without money went thirsty and many times individuals who had laboured long and hard to make a few hundred dollars, whether by trapping or on a labourer job, were seen to spend their whole stake in just a few hours of wild conviviality.

While most subjects interviewed professed at first to drinking because of tedium, it became apparent that motivation was far more complex than this. Many males showed anxiety about their future, and complained of tension and mild to moderate depression. They expressed bitterness toward the government, toward white men in general, and particularly, toward Navy personnel, mainly because so many women preferred their company when possible. Many times, when in the company of drunken men, especially of middle and young age groups, I heard comments such as, "Who does he think he is just because he's white?" On a number of occasions I heard drunken men refer to their own skin colour as brown or black or yellow. Clearly then, among those who drank for the supposed relief of tedium and whose behaviour culminated in euphoria and sleep, there were many evidences of emotional disturbances which were temporarily relieved by alcohol.

In some instances there were outbursts of violence, sometimes temporary and controllable; at other times, markedly impulsive, assaultive, not subject at all to reason and ending in arrest and imprisonment for disorderly conduct and assault and battery. Individuals involved in these incidents tended to be less euphoric and sociable when drinking, but were rather sullen, tense, irritable, surly and quarrelsome. Fights would commence on slight or picayune provocation, but hardly ever would weapons be used other than fists and feet.¹ In no instance throughout, at least, the summer of 1966, was there a case of assault against a white man, even though bitter feelings about them were so frequently expressed during drunkenness. Instead, men assaulted Eskimo acquaintances, generally with much shame after becoming sober. Sometimes the adversary would be an Indian, but there did not seem to be, even in drunken groups, any special pairing off of Eskimo versus Indian. Violence against whites occurred during the act of arrest, when some men would strenuously resist. In a few cases, virtually berserk fury was observed at such times. In the sample of jailed drinking offenders, both male and female, from whom the author obtained biographies, most were repeaters who had been arrested for disorderly conduct.

In some instances, men who were ordinarily good-natured, hard working, gentle and good-humoured in their daily contacts would, after a few convivial rounds of beer, suddenly

¹Inspector K. Smith of the R.C.M.P. noted that he had seen very little violence with weapons and, in such instances, mental disturbance was usually suspected, often corroborated by other Eskimos.

burst forth in wild, assaultive, unprovoked violence. They seemed out of contact, unreachable even by close friends, and bent on a destructive course. One of these men, intimately known to the author, generally requires the combined efforts of several policemen before he can be subdued. His behaviour closely resembles that of some Eastern Arctic Eskimos accustomed to living on the land and only recently exposed to alcohol. It is felt that this man's response to alcohol, like that of others who manifest this reaction in varying degrees, represents a pattern relating strongly to Eskimo basic character potentials, which will be discussed in later sections.

Sometimes alcohol, instead of producing euphoria, seems to release despondency and depression. Subjects so affected spoke of their unhappiness in the present and their fears for the future. They told of family difficulties, and were nostalgic about dead loved ones and about happier times. Men bemoaned their lack of jobs and skills, gave evidence of low self-regard and a sense of failure, and revealed much anxiety about being able to win or hold a woman's regard. Among younger males, depending upon how much they trusted the author, how drunk they were, or how much they were seeking a sympathetic ear outside their own group where they might be less ashamed, there was much anxiety about sexual prowess and about difficulties in sexual performance, indicating various levels of potency disturbance. Frequently these young men drank to relieve their anxiety, only to find that alcohol made them more impotent.

Drinking among females was observed also in all age groups, including teenage girls who were able to obtain beer or whisky through illegal sources, usually from men of legal age, generally native, but frequently white. The goal of the males was generally to provide alcohol as a means toward sexual ends, usually successfully accomplished. From a variety of sources, including parents, clergymen, social scientists in the field, and young female informants, as well as from observation of events in the unserved area, it is evident that sexual activity in the young female population is widespread and very much associated with the drinking patterns of this group. Often a girl will not go with a boy unless he provides drink and, conversely, a young man, white or native, with the wherewithal can be virtually assured of a "party".

Illustrative comments include the two following pithy, but melancholy examples. A clergyman of wide knowledge and experience in the region stated, "Pre-adolescent girls are studious and well-behaved until after puberty. Then they all behave like prostitutes". When I questioned the word "all", he sadly reaffirmed it. While he might be exaggerating just a little, there is no question of the ubiquity of sexual activity of the young women. A young male Eskimo, when asked why the girls were currently reticent about marriage, replied with a smile, "Why, they get married every night."

Now, it is the author's purpose neither to create a concept of what is good morality nor to support any known system. Hence, the ubiquity of sexual activity in the young females does not in itself betoken pathology or social deterioration. What is of significance, however, is the manner of expression, the goals, and the association between sex and alcohol in so many instances.¹

Two general patterns were observed with regard to the sexual behaviour of young females, the first noted less often, the latter more typical; namely, simple hedonism and, on the other hand, highly motivated patterns of choice, with overtones obviously suggestive of conflict and emotional disturbance. It is these latter patterns which are stressed in this report, since in my judgement, the incipient breakdown and chaotic future

¹The author has much corroborative data from biographies of a number of young women, obtained mainly because it is easier to get Eskimo women interested in interviews than young men.

of Eskimo culture are closely tied to the rapidly changing goals of the female, to tensions in male-female relations which have their roots in the aboriginal culture, and to the mechanisms for releasing these tensions.

The following illustration demonstrates aptly a variety of overt conflict patterns, as revealed in data from a woman in her late twenties. The material is disguised and her identity should not be betrayed by the limits placed on this brief presentation.

I met her at the hotel, in the lounge frequented mainly by whites and a few natives who prefer a quieter atmosphere and more genteel setting than "The Zoo". She is an attractive Eskimo woman who was sitting quietly sipping a beer while I was chatting with a man who turned out to be her relative. He introduced us and she seemed politely eager to share the company of a white man, especially one in an apparently "official" capacity. She was rather embarrassed by her relative who was getting drunker by the moment, but who finally went off to sleep elsewhere. Although pleased at my presence, she was quite tense and drank at least six bottles of beer, but without becoming overtly drunk. She was rather pleased by her appearance. In the typical habit of younger Eskimo women, she wore dark, tight-fitting slacks, a feminine version of desert boots, a white blouse and light blue windbreaker. Unlike Eskimo teenage girls, she did not tease her hair or attempt to wear it in Southern style, but allowed it to flow to her shoulders.

After learning that I was interested in the view of life of Eskimo women, she launched rapidly into a partly orderly and partly breathless account of her life story, family background, and tastes.

The trend of her conversation was almost like the pattern of free association of a patient in analysis. She referred with pride to a modicum of white blood and repeatedly pointed out how she disliked the violence of tundra life, crudeness of her brothers and the drudgery of a woman's life on the land. As she spoke, her gestures and demeanor were at times imitative of those of sophisticated white women whom she had probably seen in the movies. On the other hand, she was most sincere, genuinely grateful for the company of someone who was interested in her story and, of course, pleased to be the date of a white man.

Speaking on the one hand objectively and like a self-respecting adult, who wanted to make a good impression on me both culturally and as a woman, she also offered the information that she had lost all her teeth and wore full upper and lower plates. She asked innumerable questions about the South, mostly intelligent and relevant, and then wanted to know if I saw many movie stars on the streets of New York. She expounded on her desire to study beyond her third grade education and told of the books she had read, mainly paperback editions of current popular novels.

At this point, a very drunk Indian man came to the table and pleaded her to leave with him. Obviously she had known him intimately, but tried to deny his presence, let alone any acquaintance with him. After he went off, she assured me that she had never talked with him before. As the discussion went on, she began to touch my knee with hers under the table, discreetly, but definitely. At this point her discussion became more and more vehement about her distaste for native men and she said sharply, "I'll never marry a man who has no future".

At this point the bar was closing, at 1:00 A.M. She asked me to buy a couple of cartons of beer and come down to her cabin with her. I accepted, and in the full light of the midnight sun, we emerged into a crowd, most of whom watched us closely with smiles and smirks, and walked on to her cabin. She was somewhat embarrassed by the scene outside the lounge, but showed also unmistakable pride with regard to her escort.

At her cabin, she proceeded to drink more beer and, since I had had my limit and drank no more, she asked if I was displeased to be drinking with her, or with her company. When I assured her to the contrary, she asked me why I didn't make advances to her. I told her that I was there as a friend and with no ulterior motives and she replied that I had bought her a lot of beer. When I told her that she owed me nothing for it and that I simply enjoyed her company, she suddenly began to cry and then to sob almost uncontrollably. She proceeded then to speak of her dreadful fears of a barren future, empty life and ultimate marriage to a native who would live on welfare and spend his life in the pub. She revealed that she had children by several white men and had hoped to marry one of them and "get out" (of the North).

To my questions about her heavy drinking she replied that it kept her from suicide, although she was depressed by drinking. (Apparently alcohol doesn't elevate her mood, but it does allay her anxiety). She pointed out that her life was sustained by her children and by her menial job, from which she derived a sense of usefulness and dignity.

At this point, a car drove up and there was a loud knocking on the door. She admitted a white man of about 35, who held a certain official position in Inuvik. He strove mightily to maintain his composure and to act toward me in a casual manner. He was obviously proprietary, jealous of her evening with me and had followed us to her cabin. He asked her to go outside for a moment for a word; soon I heard an altercation and then he drove off – with her. She did not return after fifteen minutes, and so I departed. When I saw her a few days later, she was contrite, apologetic, and full of denial about what transpired when they drove off and about her relationship with him – explanations for which I had not asked. She did explain that he was not the father of her children.

On subsequent evenings she spoke more about her life and goals and, particularly of her state of depression. She often spoke longingly of her dead father, less of her mother. One evening, after admonishing several teenage girls who had come to her cabin with illegally obtained whisky and having sent them away, she began to cry and stated bitterly that if she were ever jailed she would hang herself.

The above sketch illustrates several salient features typical in the histories of a number of women who were interviewed, some older, some younger than the one described. Significant of this particular group is the groping to achieve some measure of stability through work, avoidance of overtly abandoned sexual and drinking patterns, and an overwhelming desire to be acceptable by white standards. They quite consciously are ashamed of their origins, repudiate native men and harbour the pathetic illusion that they can be more to white men than objects for sexual exploitation.¹

Further, although these women in some ways show more maturity than do younger females whose drinking habits and sexual promiscuity are less selective and more impulsive, they nevertheless do not reveal evidence of a sense of mature love. Their conscious motives for involvement with white males vector about the desire for self-validation and elevation of status, both financially and socially. They are poorly equipped to offer and implement responsible love, the willing give and take, the forbearing understanding and sympathy, so necessary for an enduring relationship. At best, their feelings of love are overly romanticized, overly demanding, dependent, and unrealistic. The infantile level of their desires is manifested by low frustration tolerance to denial, with rapid mobility of feelings from rage to depression; there is little awareness of their lack of emotional equipment or the immaturity of their purposes.

¹This is not to say that there have not been successful marriages between white men and Eskimo women. In these few instances, however, the Eskimo women were much more assimilated and stable than the group dealt with in this report.

As illustrated in the above example, there are overwhelming dependent longings implicit in the personality structure of these women, manifested by frequent references to parents, in this instance, to "the good father". It is notable and typical of so many women interviewed that, once they discovered that I really wanted to hear their stories and was not interested in making advances, they gave vent to expressions of anxiety and depression; quite evidently, I was being put in the role of the good parent who might magically make things right.

That the above potentials are not simply due to current social problems, but are at the same time expressions of certain implicit Eskimo conflict foci, will be demonstrated in a later section.

Patterns of Conflict Pertaining to Work.

Various expressions of conflict appear in the area of work, and tend to centre upon the availability of jobs, the range of occupational opportunities, and the attitudes which Eskimo men bring to the work situation. In general, the people who employed Eskimos said that they were reliable and hard workers, when they cared to work and when they showed up. Frequently, after working steadily for days or weeks, some men will disappear without warning to fish or hunt, returning when ready and oblivious to the disturbance this causes among employers. The latter often are outraged by Eskimos' casualness about schedules, and may express contempt for a group that does not operate by white man's standards. This in turn may lead to pressure on the Eskimo, who responds with passive resistance or, if he is openly censured and chided, feels hurt and depressed and ultimately handles the problem with alcohol, further compounding his problems with "the boss".

At least during the summer, there seem to be many more jobs available than takers. Younger males, particularly, complain a great deal about lack of opportunities, but often they do not seize those that are present, and instead express unrealistic longings for more glamorous work. It is difficult to assess the full extent of reliance on social assistance, but there is no doubt that the number of people "living on welfare" is considerable. There is a proclivity, especially on the part of town-reared Eskimos but also among many of those raised on the land, to lack drive toward work and to be dependent, without shame, on government welfare assistance. Lack of initiative and expressions of disillusionment concerning available economic opportunities are widespread.

Apparently these attitudes, orientations, and work patterns stem from a number of circumstances, including lack of job training programs, lack of available jobs at the end of existing programs, and the generally seasonal nature of most employment opportunities. However, I suggest that they also stem in some significant degree from Eskimo cultural or character traits which are at variance with Euro-Canadian values pertaining to work.

Many young men speak longingly of life on the land and of earning at least a partial living from trapping, but few follow through, either because of lack of skills, or lowered initiative. Instead, so often, the thwarted longing is expressed under the influence of alcohol, and implementation stays in the realm of fantasy.

In fact, among the few relatively conflict-free Eskimos known well by the author, are several land-dwelling young men who live amongst and work with older relatives. These work hard and garner much of their living from trapping and their food from nature. They also come to Inuvik for a time in the summer for part-time work to raise some cash for particular needs. They will not work at a steady job, not because of passive goals, but out of pride. Significantly, although they will sometimes drink heavily, I, at least, have never seen them out of control and they are among the few who make some money without

squandering it. An example of their behaviour in this regard occurred one night at the hotel when I encountered several of them going in. They greeted me heartily and cordially and invited me for a drink. As we sat down, one clapped me on the back and said, "Come on, Doc, if you want to ask me questions, ask them now because I'm going to get drunk". Having known him in the bush, where we had shared food and talk, I felt some disappointment which must have appeared on my face. He laughed and said that he was not such a fool as to throw away his money on alcohol. I left and, on returning several hours later, discovered him still there, but not drunk or replete with beer. A long conversation revealed that he felt a certain alienation from, and even guilt toward, those people who drank to excess and demanded that the affluent spend their money on alcohol. He provided much information, corroborated by others, about the changing values of Eskimos in a developing money economy. He explained that food and basic subsistence requirements were cheerfully shared with others, but not money or capital producing equipment. He confessed to feeling ashamed, however, when others wanted to use his equipment and he wanted to refuse them. The essential point was that he had strongly ambivalent reactions to the needs, let alone the claims, of others.

Evidence from him and others who stay close to the land indicates changing and ambivalent attitudes with regard to possessions, attitudes that come into conflict with traditional values about property. This, along with factors relating to competition, envy, and accumulation of possessions, may play a vital role in some of the difficulties observed in the Delta with regard to poor work initiative, low potentialities for creative effort, and reluctance to compete for advancement and position.

Vital in men of his stamp is a marked reluctance to take orders from others. Aside from resistance to direct control from authority, there is also sensitivity to adherence to a job routine which is structured and demanding of sustained co-ordinated action by a group. The Eskimo tends to be quite resistive to degrees of organizational constraint and authority generally acceptable without question in our own culture, which, somewhat paradoxically, tends to prize and respect individuality and independence of spirit.

This particular man articulated, for those of his type, a basic attitude: "If I work for a boss, then I stop being a man, I'm shit. I don't like anyone to tell me what to do. If I work in the town, then I do white man's work and I'm no good because I don't know it so well. If I stay in camp, I know how to do." Then, with an earnest and hearty manner he clapped me on the shoulder and said, "You're good at asking right questions and you want to help the people, but come out with me and I'll show you how to get fur and food and you don't have to ask government for anything. I work for myself. The white man is too bossy."

During this conversation he was eating muktuk¹ that I had prepared along with bannock and tea. He ate the entire quantity, several pounds, apparently not noticing that it was all I had at the moment. He departed to check his fish nets. Some hours later he returned with several dried fish, set them down, proceeded to eat again, this time with me joining him, and continuing to express his thoughts in the same vein as before. Suddenly his usually cheerful face showed anxiety and then a kind of vehemence as he said, "Jesus, Doc, isn't this the best way?" Then he shook his head and added, "My wife likes Inuvik. I guess I'll have to work there." He uttered an obscenity and walked out without another glance or word.

This man represents a certain number still capable of deriving most of their livelihood from the land and feeling quite consciously a quantum of contempt for those who live on

¹ A delicacy consisting of boiled whale skin.

welfare or are dependent upon government jobs. However, in spite of his relative independence and self-respect, he is aware that he cannot compete in white man's skills and, in part, must sustain his pride by insistence on the superiority of the old life. Were he truly living entirely from the land, his pride might have been considered wholly intact and healthy. But, perforce, he requires many manufactured implements and articles of equipment and it is this, perhaps, that motivates his vehemence in expressing pride which is not as firmly based as he would maintain. Add to this his wife's preference for Inuvik and his dilemma becomes self-evident. He, however, is far more intact than not, considering the jaws of the vise in which he is caught. What then might transpire if the Delta fails to provide food and fur?

This particular man's fundamental feelings and fantasies about the white man were not articulated to any degree in overt statements or behaviour, perhaps because he still can live most of his life away from the unpleasant stimuli of people in a superior technical and social position. His walking out on me, whom he generally treated with friendliness and courtesy, was surely an instance of surging of resentment against the white, even against one by whom he felt less threatened, and with whom he could communicate. At our next encounter he behaved in his usual jovial manner, as if nothing had occurred. I did not pursue the issue, partly because I forbore offending him and partly because there was no question but that I could easily have provoked him to losing his temper, hence his composure, to him a source of shame.

Resentment of pressure on privacy, mechanisms of ego support based on emphasis upon one's realistic abilities and skills, refusal to become dependent upon others' largesse, a spirit of pleasure-bound awareness of one's own individuation and avoidance of competition in areas for which one is poorly equipped — none of these is pathological. However, we may well ask what will happen in future to such a man, so far able to live by his own resources, who has retained basic Eskimo character traits even while he has internalized certain values borrowed from western culture.

It will be instructive to examine another case, this time of a man far better adapted to the white community than most, since his behaviour exemplifies overtly the mixed attitudes of many Eskimos toward whites, and the nature of Eskimo conflicts when in contact with the dominant culture. This man lived on the land until his late teens, was and still is expert in the skills of survival and subsistence, learned to speak and write English almost unassisted, came into close contact with whites mainly in his early twenties, when he then married, and has subsequently been providing for his family by work in the town and by a good deal of hunting, fishing and trapping.

He is quite articulate about native needs and about the role of government in the region, but is often unrealistic and too sanguine about the natives' abilities to develop their skills and enhance their social position in a short period of time. In general, he tends to blame whites for the region's difficulties, certainly often quite correctly, if with undue emphasis on the unilateral fixing of responsibility for evoking change.

His reasons for living in the town are centered about his desires for education for his children and their future in the Canadian community. His pride, although somewhat related to his job in the town (actually a minor one by white standards, a fact known to him), is centered almost exclusively in his ability to function on the land.

The respect and company of whites is important to him and he is sought out as an informant. He enjoys the role and derives realistic satisfaction from such associations. However, it is his own character, rather than his information, which is revealing.

He is generous and helpful as a companion in the field, gracious and open-handed as a host in the town. Among white male acquaintances, he expresses friendliness and camaraderie. However, one soon notices his need to be the center of a discussion, and he soon grows bored or irritated if conversation is not directly vectored about his own areas of competence. He needs very much to be in the role of the expert among novices in the North, and shows a scarcely veiled disdain for those not knowledgeable about the outdoors. However, he is more restrained with older white men who seem to have advanced professional skills, and toward them his reaction is a mixture of courtesy, deferences and attention, on the one hand, and on the other a readiness for sarcasm and snide innuendo, and an inclination to probe for weaknesses whenever he fancies an informational error or behavioural slip on the part of those whom he otherwise respects. He attempts a joking relationship with those with whom he wants to be a peer, but can be truly savage in his humour with those whom he considers lesser in status in the white hierarchy. When sober, he jokes frequently about the stupidities of white men; when a little drunk, his humour refers much to death and injury of white men and even to joking threats on his own part. He has on several occasions, when quite drunk, made rather frightening threats and gestures with weapons, but with apparent laughter and little show of actual rage.

By contrast, I have had long talks with him late into the night, during which a certain amount of alcohol loosened inhibitions and induced him to reveal sadness and depression, rather than his usual defensive humour. On one occasion he wept very much, bemoaning his sense of inferiority to the white man and expressing fears that his children would be discriminated against in the South for their colour. He spoke often with nostalgia for his early years and expressed the hope that I could see him as a capable man and not as an inferior.

Not long before my departure, he made cogent observations about the possible relationships between native and white man, speaking at first of the pleasant understanding that existed between him and myself, but adding half bitterly and half sadly, "There is always a difference. I stay and you go away whenever you want and you will come back when you want and ask me more questions". There was no answer to this, for it was a truth and should be recognized by all research investigators.

Just before I departed, he brought me two dried whitefish as snacks for my trip home. This is reported not to create a mood of pathos, but as an illustration of a typical feature of his character and behaviour, for he would frequently follow moods of unkindness with such gestures of friendship and solicitude.

His behaviour among women seemed to follow a certain pattern. He was deferential to his wife, who reacts to his importunities with patience and a kind of gentle tolerance tinged with mild reproof. At the same time he draws sharp demarcation lines with regard to role and function between male and female. He is embarrassed and, therefore, rather uncommunicative, in the presence of white women, but is overtly polite and courteous. He appears somewhat amused at the courtesies accorded white women by white men, especially so in terms of the easy assertiveness and sense of equality expressed by the women. At a camp, however, he spent all his time in male company, other than when getting food, and quite naturally fitted the patterns of role demarcation, along with the other Eskimo men at the site.

This man, all in all, shows quite sharply a variety of conflicts emerging from his life of transition between two cultures, in one of which his intelligence, energies and skills would easily serve his needs for self-validation, status and prestige; in the other, however, in which he also wants similar self-regard and acceptance, he finds himself in a low status job, with

skills undeveloped for advancement or for rank as a peer of those whites whom he respects and to whose status he basically aspires. His prestige goals are partly satisfied by the personal esteem a number of whites accord him and by their turning to him for information and consultation in various matters relating to the community. However, he recognizes his lower social and educational status, the separation of communities which has been instituted by the whites, and the impossibility of his ever attaining his aspirations. He is, therefore, perpetually in a state of ambivalence about both whites and natives, wanting acceptance by both, wishing at the same time to repudiate identification with the latter, resentful of his subordinate relationship with the former. His humour illy disguises his repressed violent and vindictive rage, and alcohol reveals two aspects of his emotional structure: intense fury on the one hand, depression on the other.

In the two cases just outlined, we see forms of emotional conflict which appear to be typical among individuals who try hard to support themselves and their families by sustained work, refusing to fall back upon welfare. Their self-esteem, regardless of its precarious features, including illusions, is still relatively intact and involves certain realistic factors of self-awareness. The examples cited represent types of individuals who grew up on the land and came from family backgrounds which were land oriented and essentially traditional in their values, in spite of Christian conversion and shifting economic goals. Members of this group range in age from mid-twenties to perhaps mid-forties; in a variety of ways, perhaps especially in their educational and job experiences, these men have had a good deal more exposure to western culture and institutions than did their parents.

Conflict in Younger People

Another group studied consists of young people ranging in age from the mid-teens to mid-twenties. Despite the rather wide age span it seems appropriate to consider these people as a group, for they tend to face similar problems and conflicts with respect to the development of technical and social skills, and the achievement of respected status. This is perhaps especially true in a situation where many of the values of a dominant culture are at variance with those of a subordinate and traditional culture. Certainly it is true that the young people who were interviewed, ranging in age from sixteen to twenty-seven, exhibited similar conflict patterns. Few youngsters under sixteen were studied, partly because of time limitations, but mainly because of the difficulty in finding any who were willing to be interviewed, or who would say much if they were. Of course, some information was obtained by direct observation and inference.

In general, the most intact and conflict-free subjects came from stable families where the father held a steady job or made a productive living on the land, drinking was not excessive, and children came under relatively close parental supervision. Furthermore, there seemed to be a positive relationship between freedom from emotional disturbance and increasing distance of residence from Inuvik. Finally, there was some evidence to suggest that conflict-free children originated in families in which the parents have a strong admixture of Caucasian ancestry, and in families showing strong adherence to fundamentalist religious doctrine.

On the other hand, there is evidence that disturbed adolescent behaviour is correlated with a variety of disruptive family influences, some of which may have severe consequences for the stability, aspirations, and Ego Ideal of the developing child. Such influences may include any or all of the following: economic instability and willing dependence on welfare; death or absence of one parent; heavy drinking by one or both parents; adoption into another family in early childhood; extreme parental permissiveness and lack of direction, particularly among town dwellers. Furthermore, adolescent emotional disturbance also appears to correlate with the emergence of certain conflict

patterns, implicit in the culture, which are released as the old homeostatic controls fail and new goals remain unformed or only vaguely discerned.

Some of the observed pathology is similar in both males and females; other patterns are more peculiar to each sex. The common overt expressions of conflict involve drinking, sexual promiscuity, and irresponsibility in the pursuit of goals, whether at school or at work.

A prime and uniform observation, seen in both sexes, was confusion of aims and goals for the future, interspersed with much complaining about non-availability of jobs or training. However, hardly ever was a subject able to give a rational account of what he or she would like to do as a life venture. There were many, "I don't know's", certainly to some degree conditioned by the lack of organized work opportunities or training programs. Sometimes there were romanticized ideas in girls, usually about becoming school teachers or nurses. Such goals, needless to say, would be most salutary and potentially gratifying if they were not based solely on a dependent identification with some known member of one of these professions, and if the aspirant showed the educational or motivational equipment necessary for following through. So many of those interviewed paid lip service to pleasure in school work, but most appeared to have poor academic records.

One conspicuously absent goal in the girls was the desire to make a good marriage and raise a family. If this were to be substituted by a career of some sort, in the fashion of declaration by many teenage girls in our culture, it would be less potentially disruptive. But the goals of these Eskimo girls were diffuse and unformed. Their principal aims were hedonistic and directed at immediate gratification of impulse, with little awareness of or concern for the future.

In a good number of instances, there was outright declaration of the desire to marry a white man, either spontaneously stated or elicited almost angrily after prolonged or repeated interviews. In some instances, girls who vehemently denied interest in whites were later seen choosing the company of whites and, in several instances, angrily trying to shake off a young Eskimo while trying to make a date with a white.

Girls in general go far to imitate the dress, manner, habits and appearance of white women¹. There are sufficient data to warrant the conclusion that many wish they were white and can feel a certain sense of validation in this direction by capturing the interest of white men. From a number of observed instances in the Delta and elsewhere in the Arctic, the conclusion is drawn that the female's resentment of Eskimo males and her proclivity toward white men constitute two of the gravest signs of breakdown of Eskimo culture, and contribute greatly to emotional disturbance in the males.

It has already been suggested that many young girls have guilt feelings about their sexual behaviour and seek to overcome their inhibitions with alcohol, while many young men apparently have potency disturbances which they attempt to deny by sexual athleticism. It is possible that these signs of emotional conflict are reflections, at least in part, of disparate elements in Eskimo and in western culture; while hedonistic sexual activity survives as a pattern of the traditional culture, there is a conflicting overlay of Christian morality to which the young people have been exposed all their lives. This will be discussed more fully in a later section.

¹In a recent communication D.G. Smith reported that a 12 year old girl had come to him, after walking a long distance at -30°F., her face badly burned by hot raw laundry bleach which she had applied to make her skin lighter.

Finally then, evidences of emotional conflict appear in all groups in close contact with the dominant culture and dependent on it for subsistence. These conflicts express themselves in the aforementioned modes of drinking and sexual acting out; in friction between the sexes, particularly female rejection of native males; and in feelings of inferiority. The most prominent emotional elements of neurotic behaviour are severe anxiety, frequent feelings of depression and loneliness and, in many instances, acting out of previously repressed rage.

CHAPTER III

FACTORS IN ESKIMO BASIC PERSONALITY

There will be no attempt to make an exhaustive survey of all facets of Eskimo basic personality, for this would constitute a major report in itself, involving issues and data tangential to the present purpose. Our object is to correlate the observed social pathology with features of Eskimo character structure, particularly those features which, in the old culture, already bore the seeds of personal and interpersonal conflict. Although the culture has undergone changes in the past forty or fifty years, certain patterns have persisted in human relations, emotional organization, attitudes, and values. These provide the matrix for reactions to stress characteristic of the group and it is to these modes of response that this section addresses itself.

Basic personality may be defined as the inventory of shared responses common to all members of a society, integrated into the unconscious, deviation from which will elicit some reaction from the group, usually negative. These responses are the resultant of interaction between affective and intrapsychic systems, on the one hand, and social practices, on the other. These social practices were derived initially as primary modes of adaptation to the physical environment and any other pressures that related to the survival of the group as a whole and, since they subserved survival, they became institutionalized. Initially, since early man was not a social planner, most primary systems probably came into being by trial and error or by accident, stood the tests of adaptive utility and efficiency and, ultimately, became institutions. Thus systems originally derived partly rationally are not necessarily indoctrinated into the children of succeeding generations by rational means, but rather by emotionally oriented indoctrination involving the reward-punishment system, including approval and love to subserve the former, guilt and shame, the latter. To the parent the modes were simply there and any other system would be unfamiliar, hence unthinkable.

Within the framework of integration of response potentials, there is of course a range of possibilities for individuation. Usually the ambit of permissible deviation is itself institutionalized and a given range of deviation or even aberrance distinguishes individuals from one another, in certain instances obviously, in others far more subtly. For example, in our culture, sexual behaviour has been prohibited in childhood, with varying degrees of terrorization of the child imposed by the parent. Hence some adults emerge with severe potency or frigidity disturbances and avoid sexual activity, with concomitant subtle extensions into social attitudes and behaviour. Others come through unscathed and are able to establish healthy intersexual relations and social feelings. Another group, particularly males, may become sexual athletes in order to prove constantly their secretly doubted virility. These males have almost exclusively sexual interest in women, with little emotional attachment and, indeed, harbour fear and hostility toward them. Women may emerge with analogous patterns. There are many clinical possibilities, involving a large gamut of potentials both in terms of social as well as sexual attitudes. The important point is that a highly charged institutionalized practice, prohibition of sex in childhood, may elicit a variety of individuated characterological traits.

Axiomatically, indoctrination instituted early is soon integrated by the child, becomes automatized (unconscious) and shapes his responses ever after. He does not know

why he responds in a certain way to a certain stimulus, but he knows that he must or he will feel anxious. In a far more subtle way, the unconscious desire to deviate may elicit anxiety in one form or another (apprehension, tension, irritability, nameless guilt feelings, etc.) and the individual will have no idea why he feels these sensations. He may then resort to a variety of modes of ego defense in order to allay the unpleasant feelings, let alone to keep the unwelcome basic impulse in check, all with no conscious idea of the nature of the primary process. Such is the nature of neurotic character traits.

The deeply integrated shared responses that combine to form basic personality in a society change but slowly, and only if major events alter the entire pattern of the culture and render inoperational and unadaptive the old traits. However, even in such instances change comes slowly, if at all, and the individual in a changing society, instead of adapting easily to new conditions and altering his reactions, will tend to cling to them and to rationalize his inertia. This may be seen as one aspect of what social scientists have called "cultural lag".

The primary institutionalized patterns to which children are exposed in any society are in three groups:

1. Modes of providing for basic biological needs, including food, warmth, bowel and urinary activity, protection from dangers.
2. Modes of induction of basic disciplines with regard to excretory functions, sexual activity, and aggression.
3. Modes directed toward attainment of status, prestige, acceptance, and respect.

The character, outlook, range and quality of emotions, and values and goals of the individual will be shaped from these primary systems in terms of how they are indoctrinated, by whom, with how much solicitude or indifference, and with what kinds and how much of rewards and punishments. By and large, the modes of indoctrination are characteristic for given cultures but with varying ranges in style, although generally they are relatively constant in smaller homogeneous groups.

From the qualitative and quantitative structure of and emotional responses to these indoctrinated modes, and according to how they were infused by the parents and the community, the child forms fantasy elaborations concerning what to expect from others, in terms of his own powers, weak or able, confident or fear-ridden. From this fantasy level will evolve projective phenomena; that is, attitudes and perceptions related to the primary reactions to the basic indoctrinated systems, and these patterns will bear emotional qualities, pleasurable in terms of rewards and painful in terms of punishments. These will in turn be accepted as governing forces in the choices, behaviour, and attitudes toward life implicit in the given social system, and will be transmitted from generation to generation by the modes of social indoctrination and education characteristic of the particular society. These projective phenomena include:

- mores
- values
- religion
- folklore
- neurotic traits

If the experience of all members of a given social group is the same with regard to the kinds, methods, and personnel involved in indoctrination, and if the basic practices

instituted are the same for all in terms of the three primary institutionalized patterns outlined above, then it follows that there will be more or less uniformity of projective patterns, particularly in social groups which initially were small, homogeneous, and isolated from outside contact with other cultures. If one may make the theoretical assumption that these processes occur during the inception, growth, development and integration of common goals and needs of a group, one can postulate the development and perpetuation of a uniformity of values, mores, folklore, religion and neurotic types and potentials.

While the environment, of course, will determine the kinds of survival problems any culture must face, the reaction patterns to the primary indoctrinated systems will determine the ways in which the forces of nature are personified. Religion and folklore must be consistent with and relevant to the unconscious attitudes which members of a society have toward the figures that protected, cared for, taught and disciplined them in infancy; and values, conscience structure, mores and fear patterns, realistic or neurotic, must also have direct relationship with the same early figures. A culture that encourages certain activities in childhood and inflicts neither fear of nor punishment for the impulses associated with these activities, will not produce conflicts and neurotic behaviour connected with them. On the other hand, childhood prohibition and terrorization with regard to a given impulse system will block effective development of capability and pleasure relating to that system. If effective performance is then required in adulthood, then it follows that the individual will have conflict associated with the psychophysiological apparatus associated with such performance. Failure and its concomitants will result. Of such nature, for example, has been the training in sex knowledge in our own culture. The same problems may develop in the area of effective self-expression and assertion. The bare outlines of the development of neurotic character traits are illustrated as follows:

Social System (Standardized areas of sanction and prohibitions)

Parental Indoctrination

FEAR

Inhibition of function	}	— Confusion, ambivalence toward the function, avoidance and various defense mechanisms designed toward non-awareness of, or substitution for, or rationalized denigration of the activity = neurotic character trait.
Lack of capability		
Need for functioning in the area		

Failure

Lost utility	}	— Regressive devices for ego repair = neurosis.
Lost pleasure		
Lost pride		

Of highest significance, then, is the fact that there must be a coherent relationship and correlation between the patterns of indoctrination and the reactions of the individual to these patterns and to those who instituted them, on the one hand, and, on the other, the projective phenomena of whatever order. It is of vital, fundamental significance that neurotic character patterns are products of the same unconscious reactions to the same

sources. Let us turn then to various features of Eskimo basic personality and attempt to determine what role they might play in the development of current social problems.

Environmental Influences on Basic Personality.

In constructing a conceptual outline of the relationships between practices and character, it becomes apparent that some institutions are more fundamental than others in their normative influence in the formation of basic emotional responses and attitudes, which in turn condition the development of other practices. One is led, therefore, to the necessity of making what seem to be arbitrary selections of primary conditions compelling adaptation. However, Eskimo culture provides a baseline from which a logical start can be made, namely the conditions of Arctic climate and food supply, which leave little room for outside preoccupations. It would be appropriate here to quote from Birket-Smith (1959):

“In very few places in the world will the observer receive such a vivid and immediate impression of the fundamental importance of the means of subsistence to culture as among the Eskimos and, as all know, means of subsistence in this instance means hunting and fishing. It is as if the endless struggle to wrest the daily bread from a barren and merciless country has concentrated every thought upon food and how it is to be procured to a degree only equalled by the hard struggle against the cold. If the conversation of the Eskimo does not turn upon new winter clothing, it is usually about the hunt and the content of the meat caches. The sense for the purely expedient, without any tribute to considerations for aesthetics, which almost wholly stamps the culture of the Central Eskimos, must presumably to some extent be regarded in the light of their unusually hard struggle for existence. The worst enemy of the Caribou Eskimos in this struggle is the barrenness of the country itself.”

This statement, although written about the Caribou Eskimos, can surely be applied to the historic condition of Eskimo anywhere in the Arctic and provides us with the backdrop of the primary conditions to which the Eskimos made a characteristic pattern of adaptation, which led in turn to the emergence of certain character traits.

The fierce Arctic environment, with its food supplies limited to fish and game, low temperatures which condition the need for high caloric intake, limitations on aboriginal forms of shelter, and dangers of death from starvation, cold or disease, gave rise to three fundamental conditions, primary adaptation to which fashioned the basic features of Eskimo character:

- I. Food Anxiety.
- II. Hunting as the Sole Means of Subsistence.
- III. High Infant and Adult Mortality Rates.

To these irreducible environmental problems of adaptation, the Eskimo responded in characteristic ways, developing particular institutionalized modes for functioning in terms of them, which in turn conditioned particular character traits and specific projective phenomena. At this point it should be stated that while there is no “Pan-Eskimo” culture and certain cultural differences can be discerned among various groups in different parts of the Arctic, nonetheless throughout the region there is a basic uniformity to character, life cycle, customs, and mores, and to religious and folkloric patterns as well¹. From the point

¹For a fairly complete exposition of the more or less universal patterns of life-cycle, mores, religion and folklore see the studies of Lantis (10) and the author (12). It will be noted that there are striking similarities between the Nunivak and the Caribou Eskimos, two groups separated by thousands of miles.

of view of a study such as this, the differences are far outweighed by the fundamental similarities. Folk tales about heroes, major deities, and fearful supernatural or monstrous tundra creatures are strikingly similar in psychological content, if not exactly in form.

For purposes of discussion, the modes of adaptation to the three conditions listed above will be treated under separate headings, despite the fact that in reality, they may interlock and overlap. Following discussion of these adaptive modes, a composite picture of Eskimo character will be presented, and projective phenomena germane to the study examined. The homeostatic factors of the land culture will reveal themselves in the discussion and will provide the backdrop against which to observe and analyze the effects of changing social and economic conditions, and the correlation of social pathology with character traits in the current setting of anomie.

I. Food Anxiety

Although the land Eskimo has always been resourceful and able in securing game for food and clothing, the caprices of weather and availability of animals have at all times presented a threat of starvation. Frequent episodes of famine and death from diseases associated with malnutrition have marked the history of this people in all parts of the Arctic.

Anxiety about survival, while generally neither overt nor subversive of the capacity for pleasurable living, nevertheless has been an ever-present primary problem of adaptation. The following practices developed and effectively served the processes of survival:

1. High development of utilitarian skills and functional implements.
2. Sharing of the hunting range and game.
3. Reciprocal obligations between members of both the immediate and extended family.
4. Reciprocal obligations among families of the same hunting band.
5. Frequent giving away and adoption of children.
6. Promising of children in marriage even before birth.
7. The right to avail oneself of all available resources, food or implements.
8. Female infanticide.
9. Abandonment of the aged if food supplies were short or if they were too feeble to travel.

The adaptive utility of these practices lay in:

1. Assurance of equitable distribution of food by:
 - (a) Promotion of mutual responsibility and obligation (1-7).
 - (b) Population control (8-9).
2. Impossibility of accumulation of wealth, thereby eliminating certain sources of envy and competition.

The first seven are quite centripetal in their effects and, by stimulating perception of others as sources of individual security through mutual aid and responsibility, gave rise to elements in the basic personality with a high potential for promoting social cohesiveness. These are:

1. Capacity for warm affect and emotional constellations that stimulate interpersonal bonds (e.g. gratitude, friendship, pleasure in providing pleasure, etc.).
2. Lowering of potentials for envy, anxiety, hostility and suspicion of motives of others.
3. Capacity for trust.
4. Perception of the self as valued both in the family and in the community at large, leading to self-confidence, self-regard and readiness to accept responsibility, with expectation of social rewards for role fulfillment.

By contrast, these same practices, by enhancing mutual obligation, making old age a hazard, and reducing the importance of the female served as well to provoke socially divisive perceptions that led to elements of envy, resentment, suspiciousness, and desire for self-interest, factors in marked contrast with the socially binding patterns in the personality structure. These stemmed from:

1. Sacrifice of rights to individuated gratification, choice and personal possessions.
2. Constant need to be aware of obligations to others.
3. Lack of privacy and minimization of personal activity outside the general group patterns.
4. Denigration of the role and status of the aged, since subsistence depended almost absolutely on strength and endurance, particularly among males, and since the aged have no particularly greater wisdom about hunting than to vigorous, experienced younger men.
5. Denigration of the female, strikingly implicit in the practice of female infanticide.

Modes of coping with the divisive elements that gave rise to resentment, envy, and hostility were twofold; namely, guilt and shame as devices of internal control, on the one hand, and easy acceptance into the group by compliance with established norms, on the other. Ridicule, a common device in the educative processes of the child, tended, perhaps, to enhance the role of shame in Eskimo culture, so that it is a more prevalent control over unacceptable impulse and behaviour than guilt. Shame relates more closely to conscious awareness of group attitudes toward transgressions, whereas guilt is a more special form of unconsciously directed fear of conscience. The latter, in turn, derives from integration of parental values, its source and operation are less known to the individual and it involves more vague perception of the relationship between painful emotional states and the direct reasons for feeling anxiety and depression. Shame, then, involves direct awareness of one's self-image in terms of the attitudes and behaviour of one's immediate neighbors; guilt is more subtle in its origins, more automatic as a policing agent, and more of a device for self-punishment. Both mechanisms can produce anxiety and depression, anxiety being an expression of fear of damage; depression, a complex regressive sense that the damage has been done, namely deserved rejection by and loss of love from the parent or surrogates, and involving a strong element of self-punishment.

Shame and guilt, then, both play a role as control factors over negative and anti-social feelings in the Eskimo. Their profound role in Eskimo basic personality will be discussed more fully shortly.

The other mode of social control, acceptance or compliance with norms, in contrast with shame and guilt, functions as a pleasureable system, based on the rewarding qualities of respect and care proffered by the community for behaviour and attitudes which subserve mutual aid. The deprivations implicit in the egalitarian leveling of wealth and status in the community are compensated for in large part by the high value placed on generosity. Virtually every adult and settlement Eskimo questioned in the Delta (and, similarly, many others in the central and East Arctic) placed generosity at or near the head of the list as a highly desirable trait of the mature Eskimo (and, for that matter, of the Kabloona as well). Generosity serves two functions, the already implied one of preventing envy-stimulating accumulation of "wealth"; the other, as a means whereby a man might acceptably demonstrate his abilities without offending. It is as if he were to say, "I give away what I have, since I am quite capable of getting more whenever I want to! "

Competitive success, blatant declarations of superiority and boasting are frowned upon by Eskimos, if undertaken seriously rather than in a joking manner. On the land, such behaviour could have been cause for ostracism by the band, for it is destructive of social harmony in a small group. Yet highly competitive impulses and desires must have existed. That the social organization is notable for the absence of any formal patterns of chieftanship or leadership would seem to be related. Not only was this emphasis on personal autonomy due to the existence of strong Ego factors in the male, it was also a device to protect the lesser against envy, bitterness and feelings of inferiority, all of which are disruptive both of the individual and of the group.

It is important, in view of present problems of social adaptation, to note that the Eskimo is deferential only to his parents and to no one else. It might be mentioned here that he is hypersensitive to authority figures or patterns of hierarchy and rules which our culture takes quite easily for granted, even though we pride ourselves on our spirit of personal independence.

The practices of infanticide and abandonment of the aged, it should be stressed, were not carried out idly or without feeling. Eskimos are attached to their parents, less so to new born infants. The fact that abandonment was usually requested by the parent suggests a strong element of what Durkheim called "altruistic suicide" (5). Other features are involved as well in the suicide system, not all of them altruistic; these will be discussed later.

Obviously, there are strongly ambivalent factors in the relationship between the Eskimo and his parents, involving a good deal of repressed resentment of his heavy obligations toward them. This pattern is revealed by negative features in social practices and folklore, a striking example of which is the mourning pattern involving fear of the dead, even to the point of not mentioning his or her name until a newborn child or dog is given that name, thereby restoring the angry, jealous and unhappy soul to a living form again. Perhaps the most apparent evidence for this ambivalence lies in the very fact that the parent was permitted to die on the tundra in the first place.

The most relevant point of all, however, concerning these practices is that they represent a major element in Eskimo character, namely pragmatism, based on the fact that threat to survival has been so great that self-interest can supersede sentiment.

Food anxiety, then, evoked practices strikingly vectored toward promotion of group cooperation and pragmatic preoccupation with techniques for staying alive.

II. Hunting as the Sole Means of Subsistence

This primary necessity led to two major institutionalized effects that have had profound influence on the structure of Eskimo social organization and character traits, and have formed the basis for a high degree of implicit conflict in the basic personality of both male and female. These effects are sharp delineation of male and female roles, and concomitant elevation of the role of the male.

Delineation of function for these people, living as they have constantly close to the precipice of starvation, has subserved survival needs quite effectively. Virtually every male and female was proficient at a variety of skills directly related to the basics of physical survival, skills arrived at from parental teaching and, particularly, from imitation in children's play of the activities of their parents of the same sex. The male was essentially the hunter and provider of food, and the female the processor. Neither invaded the prerogatives of the other. In fact, the female was prevented by strict taboos from engaging in the hunting of food animals. (Prior to the days of the trapping economy, the woman would snare small game for clothing trim, such as foxes, or rabbits for boot linings and such purposes).

In effect, function was determined by biological and anatomical factors, the male performing tasks involving strength and physical agility and endurance, the female undertaking matters relating to child bearing and rearing, and the handling of skins for clothing and meat for the pot. I once saw a woman flense, dress out and prepare for drying the carcasses of twelve caribou in the course of one day, during which time her husband sat about drinking tea, eating bannock, (which she halted work to prepare), chatting, and relaxing. Somewhat moved by Euro-American "gallantry" and as yet unfledged in Arctic behaviour, I made an effort to help her, but was quickly restrained by her embarrassment and by the friendly, but derisive, grin of her husband and several other Eskimo male companions. I promptly joined the circle of tea drinking conviviality and never again made such an attempt. My rather guilty sensations throughout that day at watching this woman do a prodigious amount of work, were in no way shared by my Eskimo companions.¹

Actually, from the point of view of importance of function, neither male nor female holds the primary position, since survival would be impossible in the absence of the skills of either sex². Institutionally, however, the male role was dominant in the family once adulthood was attained, the functioning father of the household having complete authority with regard to hunting locations and camp movements. Before adult responsibilities were assumed, children and adolescents of both sexes had virtual equality and older sisters could exact obedience from younger brothers. This equal role for the female disappeared officially in adulthood.

Among the Eskimos, with whom, historically, utility and pragmatism have tended to play an enormous role with respect to attitudes and social practices, the female as well has fallen into the category of a utilitarian object. In the language, for example, "use" is one of the words employed to denote sexual relations with a woman.

¹ Anyone who has spent time in an Eskimo whaling camp, such as at Kendall Island, can attest to the enormous physical work load carried by the woman in skinning out a whale to prepare muktuk, blubber and dried meat.

² There is a saying on Baffin Island, "A man is the hunter his wife makes him".

However, although officially submissive to her husband and deferential to male prerogatives in general, the female has resented her secondary role and has always effectively asserted herself, if only privately, by a soft but sharp tongue, ridicule and irony and a pattern of passive aggressive behaviour manifested by silence, sulking, a manner of ignoring the male and paying no verbal or behavioural attention to him or, in extreme instances, by outright rejection of him. The latter constituted a major source of male suicide in Eskimo society. (Balikci, 1960; Lubart, 1966).

Another major effect of the primacy of hunting as the sole means of subsistence was the relentless pressure it placed upon the male, not only to provide food but to achieve success as a hunter, this being perhaps his supreme source of validation and self-esteem. While overt boasting or self-enhancing were frowned upon, still everyone knew if a man was or was not a good hunter, and there was a great deal of tacit, but unexpressed, competition. A man had to validate himself in the opinion of every member of the community, and this was a marked focus for envy and potential hostility between males. The practice of first, second, third, and even more, "harpoons" (or "lances") thrust into the animal killed by the first man served not only to establish joint ownership of the meat, but also to diminish a sense of priority of skill with regard to which man had actually made the kill. To be sure, everyone in a camp knew who the best hunters were, but the status of "camp boss" was generally tacit, being handled tactfully and without fanfare by the prime hunter. There are instances even today of superior hunters being shunned or even driven out by other men who could not bear their boasting or overbearing manner.

Solution of interpersonal conflicts incident to competition or marked hostility for other reasons was provided via the song duel, in which each contestant had to stand fast and bear the derision of his opponent in the presence of the entire camp. To resort to violence was to incur the condemnation of the group, and even expulsion. It was in such instances that men could at times resort to murder. However, generally such tremendous rage would more likely be impounded through shame and guilt and this provided another source for suicide.

The patterns of insults in the song duel serve to indicate those kinds of acts which, in the minds of Eskimos, were the most shameful and degraded of all. These, more or less in descending order of importance, were as follows:

1. To steal food from one's own children
2. To have intercourse with one's daughter.
3. To have intercourse with dogs.
4. To be a crybaby "like a woman".

These categories of aberrant behaviour, and the order in which they are presented, represent a consensus of opinion of Eskimos from several widely scattered regions of the Canadian Arctic, all of whom were interviewed by the author. Particular note should be made of the reference to underlying conflict about hunger and competition for food, and to the overt expression of contempt for an alleged quality of the female.

The male, then, generally able and apparently self-confident, nevertheless bore the constant burden of necessity to provide and to validate himself constantly before other males and, particularly, before the females, the latter already bearing him a certain measure of resentment for denigrating the female role both socially and sexually. In the summation of character structure it will become apparent that, in spite of a remarkably well-operating system of compensations and pleasures built into the cultural norms and practices, a major focus of unconscious and overt conflict in this society has always been implicit in male-female attitudes and relations. The female's sense of being exploited, the male's

consequent latent fear of her, as well as his dependence upon her, are quite evident in the folklore and religion.

III. High Mortality Rates

This third set of irreducible conditions again expresses the savagery of nature to which the Eskimo people were exposed, and to which they made the patterns of response to be considered finally in this report. These reactions are quite characteristic of Eskimo society and present rather subtle expressions of the interplay of emotional and attitudinal systems, often of quite opposite motivational significance. Observers have often been impressed by seemingly paradoxical forms of behaviour in Eskimos. These apparently contradictory patterns can be misconstrued unless there is awareness of the complexity of the need for strong emotional controls in the face of natural events whose frequency and consequences could be shattering to human stability. While this study can by no means explain all of Eskimo behaviour, some of its paradoxical qualities may appear more comprehensible after consideration of the profound effects which the constant threat of death has had upon these people.

A. Infant Mortality Rate

Of course, we do not know the magnitude of infant mortality rates before or during the early period of contact with Europeans, but some inferences may be drawn from figures compiled in recent times. For example, among Eskimos in the Northwest Territories in 1960 there were 211 infant deaths per 1000 live births, while in the same year the rate for all of Canada was only 27 per 1000 (Willis, 1962). It is suggested here that one effect of high infant death rates has been a high valuation of children, manifested by a degree of permissive and kindly rearing equalled in few other societies. While the mother may have had many tasks to perform, her preoccupations to a considerable degree vectored about care of the infant and child, the former close to her body much of the time, under her hood, and breast fed on demand for pacification; the latter, never very far away or out of sight of her solicitude or that of a parent surrogate equally kind and indulgent. The father, while not actively engaged in bodily care of the infant or child, was basically affectionate and indulgent, albeit without effusiveness.

Overt discipline was strikingly absent and demands were usually met with neither question nor rancor. Weaning was easy and unforced and, in fact, children could be given the breast until age four or five. Sphincter control was administered gradually and without punishment. Indoctrination of norms involved means varying with the age of the child. Initially there was little or no admonition; later, discipline was quietly, but effectively bred mainly via the shame system, with rather gentle ridicule of or laughter at deviant behaviour. In large measure, learning processes with regard to skills, role, and status were the product of free play involving imitation of adult activities. Induction into the adult community coincided with the achievement of technical competence and sexual maturity. There were no special rites or expressions of significance concerning this achievement other than recognition of a lad's first kill of a food animal, with less interest shown in a girl's first making a pair of serviceable boots or a parka.

Sexual activity in childhood was accepted and even encouraged. There was much free sex play between adolescents, the only taboo being against brother-sister incest. The system amounted in effect to trial marriage and, if a girl became pregnant, she usually married the father of the child. Marriage involved no special rites other than parental permission. Alternatively, in many instances, marriage was the product of parental choice made long in advance. It is highly significant that, insofar as there was any marriage "ceremony", it tended to simulate an act of kidnapping. That is, the young man came by

on his sled and sometimes had to force the girl to go with him, even though she really wanted him. Herein lies another manifestation of the male prerogative, with the female expressing her resentment of her role. It also expresses the female's great reluctance to leave her family and to take on full adult responsibility, with all its negative features. This will be discussed again later.

Standing in sharp contrast to the affection for and kindly treatment of the infant was the tradition of giving away children in adoption. This has occurred to such a marked degree that ethnologists, interested in kinship patterns and genealogies, are hard pressed to make sense of the intricate relationships between members of an Eskimo band or larger community. From the point of view of this study, however, the adoption practices point up a significant paradox, namely the marked ambivalence to infants on the part of both parents, but particularly the mother. A woman will say, "I give the baby away before I become attached to it"¹.

Often the baby or older child is given to a family or a person who "needs" a child. Numerous recipients of children whom I interviewed both in the Delta and in the Central Arctic were quite frank about the adoption as a utilitarian device, the child being wanted both for companionship (a powerfully important Eskimo need) and for its role in providing materially to the household. In general, however, it seems that most adoptees are treated as implicit members of the household, although I have seen instances in which the child has been less privileged and, perhaps, despondent².

Another factor with regard to maternal attitudes is the lack of sentimentalization or romanticization of the pregnancy, a further indication of ambivalence. There are persistent myths, supported by the writings of explorers and travellers, which tell of the ease with which women in primitive societies give birth. The truth, of course, is that child bearing was always a major hazard in Eskimo society, as well as in any other primitive culture, and no woman could be expected to look forward to this role without distaste, fear, and even resentment. If an Eskimo woman left the travelling group for a few moments to have her baby at trailside (women hardly ever have a baby in a few moments without a long period of antecedent labor) and then returned directly to the trek, I would wager that such an occurrence transpired either in the imagination of the observer, who misgauged his timing, or was the product of dire necessity in terms of the vicissitudes of dangerous travelling conditions. In effect, then, childbirth for an Eskimo woman was not a salubrious event to anticipate and probably accounted for a good modicum of her ambivalence both toward her infant and toward her husband.

Whatever the level of maternal ambivalence and of negative emergences in character which will be discussed later, the patterns of permissive and kindly child rearing produced the following emotional and attitudinal effects, integrated into the character structure, and of both positive and potentially negative consequence:

(a) *Positive Aspects of Ego Integration*

1. Capacity for warm affect and social emotions,
2. Sense of attachment to parents and surrogates, with unconscious expectation of the good intentions of others, leading to

¹ Lyons presents most striking examples of the readiness to give away infants in the behaviour of women in umiaks crowding about his ship and offering infants apparently in exchange for valuable trade goods.

² A fruitful and important area of research would be a study devoted to this important zone of Eskimo practices, and to accumulation of data both subjective and, possibly, statistical, both from the point of view of incidence and of motivational patterns.

3. Friendliness toward strangers, rather than anxiety and suspicion¹.
4. High level of mastery of utilitarian skills resulting from free play in imitation of adult activities and manipulative functions.
5. Stoicism in the face of danger or pain based on expectation of help, derived from actual experience, reinforced by unconscious magical inflation of the powers of parent figures or their projections.
6. Perception of the self as worthy and wanted.
7. High capacity for co-operative activity, based on implicit awareness of the pleasurable quotient in exchange of services.

(b) *Negative Aspects of Ego Integration*

1. Over-dependence

- (i) manifested in the male by "loneliness", wherein he will feel anxious, somewhat depressed, overtly expressing fear of unknowns in the darkness and will want to sleep in body contact with someone else, male or female.
 - (ii) manifested in the female by something of the same pattern in the male, but more particularly, in a tendency toward hysterical behaviour in the face of overwhelming personal stress².
2. High tendency toward depression in the face of denial by a loved one or death of a close person.
 3. Male fear of the female, as manifested most strikingly in the religion and folklore, stemming partly from early close contact with and marked dependence upon the mother. This will be discussed more fully shortly.
 4. Resentment on the part of both male and female if desires are thwarted, as the individual moves from the fullest kind of indulgences subserving the pleasure principle to the necessity for curbing personal goals for the sake of group harmony as demanded by the reality principle. This is manifested by the potential for violent outbursts, even murder, especially on the part of males, although, generally, the individual is more likely to express control of the rage impulses and to behave in a range from depression, through sullenness to displacement of the anger. Eskimo males will sometimes take out their rage in the senseless beating of a dog, which is actually a very valuable possession.

B. Adult Mortality Rate.

From full awareness of the precariousness of life, the Eskimo, in addition to development of high capacity for survival at the material level, developed as well a pragmatic appreciation and set of attitudes toward the possibilities of utilizing and

¹The Netsilik Eskimos do not seem to have followed the more general Eskimo patterns of hospitality to strangers, and also have manifested much evidence of mutual suspicion. That this might be related to the high degree of female infanticide extant as late as the 1940's, leading to male jealousy and mutual suspiciousness over possession of females, is a conjecture held by the author and others. The subject requires further investigation. of the observations of mutual hostility among Netsilik males, as reported by Balikci (1960).

²For more definitive discussion of specific clinical syndromes of this nature, see Parker (1962) and Vallee (1966).

enjoying the affairs of the moment. Here was a society in which gain, the wish for future expansion of possessions or status, and intense preparation for future satisfactions had little relevance in the face of limited longevity. A concept of an expanding future would have had little meaning, nor would there have been any referential experience that could condition the integration of a sense of security, or of pride in providing for more than the immediate future. The quantities of food obtainable and the modes of preparation for storage or preservation were limited; objects of wealth, beyond those implements needed for utilitarian purposes, were non-existent. As already suggested, non-accumulation of wealth served an adaptive function by limiting and controlling envy.

A legitimate and logical sense of the pragmatic possibilities of the moment was truly in order, and in no way inappropriate to the reasonable expectations that experience so harshly dictated in terms of life and death. Accordingly, two major patterns emerged, the one a hedonistic outlook on biological pleasures, eating and sex; the other a particular patterning of modes of emotional control as means for coping with disaster, current or anticipated.

The only taboos on sex were those relating to incest; brother-sister, parent-child, and, perhaps to a lesser degree, uncle-niece and, possibly, aunt-nephew. (Instances of uncle-niece intercourse are known to the author and others, and, while it is frowned upon, no special action was taken with regard to it). The practice of wife lending and wife exchange was an integral part of this hedonistic attitude and served two purposes; the one, provision of sources of available pleasure, the other, an operational and highly adaptive means toward obviating envy and hostility, by making all females essentially available to male peers. So to speak, if a man can have his neighbor's wife, he will not covet her.

Two constellations involving attitudes and emotions in human relations developed with regard to the ever-present threat of disaster and death: the first, a seemingly paradoxical sort of blunting of affective ties; the second, the complex interaction of feelings embodied in the phrase, "AYARANARAMOT", which means literally, "I am helpless".

The blunting of emotional ties embodies a sort of control over and avoidance of too close investment in others as sources of love and pleasure, and stands in contradistinction to the complex of emotions and perceptions based on kindly child care and resultant feelings of affection and closeness. However, observation of these seemingly paradoxical states ("I love you and I want and need you", as against, "I must not get too close, for it will hurt too much if I lose you") reveals that the disparity may be more apparent than real, since the usual pattern of close ties bears more the nature of dependent need by one actor upon the other, rather than of great pleasure in providing care. The latter motivation unquestionably exists in Eskimo interpersonal relations, particularly with regard to maternal attitudes toward children. However, there is little overt evidence of romanticization of adult male-female relations, and the element of dependency is quite important in all age groups. Pragmatic elements in the character rate high as behavioural and attitudinal determinants of inter-personal relations. If this were not so, how then would we explain the readiness to give away children, the abandonment of the aged, female infanticide, and wife lending and exchange? Again and again, we see that utility played an immense role in the life processes of the Eskimo, a utility not based on crass use of one another, but rather on the exchange of "utility potentials", unabashed and without hypocrisy. The system worked, and it worked well so long as the food supply lasted and goals were not diverted and subordinated by contact with the outsider - the Kabloona.

The phrase, "AYARANARAMOT", I am helpless", involves a complex pattern of feelings and reactions in contradistinction to the otherwise optimistic and self-confident

state of the Eskimo. Implicit in it is not only the idea of helplessness, but an awareness, correct or incorrect, of the overwhelming conditions that gave rise to the feeling, but without any magical connotations. "AYARANARAMOT" must not be confused with fatalism in our culture. To us, every unpleasant event must have a reason, a cause, and some element of outcome that brings relief. Fatalism, in our world, implies the existence of some cognate source or, at least, some orderly system, that predetermines a disastrous event and serves the function not only of relieving us of responsibility for it, but also of implying some good reason for its occurrence, thereby in a sense rewarding us for our loss. Western man cannot bear loss without redemption and reward.

The Eskimo makes no such demands on the cosmos nor does he have any illusions regarding redemption for loss. Disaster he regards as unoccasioned and without hope of reward or restitution. In the face of the overwhelming, he says merely, "I am helpless". This attitude can lead to a wide gamut of emotions and behaviour depending upon the quality and permanence of the event, ranging from apparent indifference to that which he cannot control, all the way to depression and suicide.

For the most part, the "AYARANARAMOT" response is followed by continuance of the affairs of life, without frequent lament or reference to the loss. Some have thought the Eskimo to be callous on this account. In such instances, his reactions embody a varying gamut of possibilities, depending upon the individual, ranging from pragmatic appraisal of necessity, with self-interest superseding sentiment, to strong control of otherwise powerful emotions. By and large, the latter seems to preponderate. In any case, the exertion of powerful controls over emotional expression, coupled with a tendency to avoid heavy emotional investments in interpersonal relations, are prime factors in Eskimo adaptation to personal stress.

CHAPTER IV

BASIC PERSONALITY AND FOCI OF TENSION IN ESKIMO SOCIETY

As stated before, this report does not deal with all facets of Eskimo character, but nevertheless covers a fairly wide array of features which are correlative with the areas of social pathology so far observed, collated and documented. Character traits shared by both male and female will be presented as a composite, and differences will then be detailed and developed.

A most striking quality of the social practices outlined above, particularly of those derived as adaptations to food anxiety, was their emphasis on patterns of intensive co-operation for survival. Furthermore, these practices were evocative of certain noteworthy attitudes and character traits. Assurance of gratification of basic needs for food, sex, and companionship produced an individual with high capacity for friendliness, amiability, hospitable aims, and a basic perception of other people as expected sources of good will. The Eskimo was essentially trusting rather than suspicious, generous rather than parsimonious, and self-confident rather than anxious in the face of difficult circumstances. Hostility and envy, while ever-present potentials, were countered by the repressive force of shame and guilt, and by the positive social rewards of respect for forbearance and tolerance of the rights and behaviour of others.

Timidity, low self-regard, connivance, deviousness and chicanery were infrequent or nearly absent in interpersonal dealings. Rather was the individual blunt, firm and unvontrived in self-expression and relationships. Evidence for a low level of interpersonal suspiciousness lay in the striking near-absence of fear of witchcraft, and in the functions of the shaman as a healer, diviner of propitious signs for the hunt, and exorcist when taboos were violated. Modes for inflicting damage upon others were few and generally unsolicited, even though the *angaqoq* had great powers.

The patterns of permissive and kindly child rearing were highly conducive to the development of capacity for skills, both social and manipulative. In addition, the individual's sense of confidence in the positive motives of others was strongly enhanced by these practices, and by their reinforcement by other members of the community outside the family.

Free play in a permissive setting, wherein children imitate and learn the utilitarian and social skills of their parents, particularly if the ambit is narrow and parental activities are about the only paradigms, constitutes one of the best systems of education known. The Eskimo, without access to any training source other than the pragmatic awareness of need for survival and co-operation, unwittingly has practiced a high level of "progressive education" in child training, as well as promoting the development of self-confidence and capacity for trust by close contact between mother and child and gradual, permissive weaning.

Although life was often hard and subsistence precarious, both male and female were capable and well endowed by this training to extract the utmost for survival from the environment, and gave up to the "AYARANARAMOT" response only when overwhelmed. They were generally playful and exuberant in their pleasures, earthy and frank in their

humour, particularly in their sexual attitudes, undeceptive in behaviour and capable of carrying on with optimism, fortitude, and confidence after disaster.

The foregoing traits represent the positive side of the ledger, and stand in contrast to certain negative features in the character structure: negative, that is, in the sense that all positive functions in any society are purchased at the price of necessarily curbing and controlling various natural impulses, the acting out of which would be disruptive to the harmony of the society as a whole. Characteristically, human beings are capable of surviving under a wide variety of conditions, and of evolving a vast array of social adaptations which subserve the total comfort of the group. Some societies survive with minimal levels of social gratification, and the individual pays a high price in terms of low levels of pleasure, high levels of anxiety, suspicion of others' motives, and minimal capacity to maintain equilibrium in the face of external pressures¹. Other groups function with much higher levels of gratification, pleasure, and positive elements of social homeostasis, in spite of a good deal of repressed negative features. Such has been the nature of Eskimo society.

The negative factors present in Eskimo personality and culture were not disruptive of social harmony. The human psyche is quite capable of handling negative tones through various modes of ego defense that render these factors unconscious. Furthermore, if the levels of pleasurable gratification are high and the practices of the society are conducive to mutual promotion of positive feelings, then these repressed, potentially disruptive patterns do not disturb the operation of the group, nor do they diminish by much the capacities for enjoyment of life and human relations. It is when the totality of the institutions and emergent values cease to be relevant to the adaptive needs of the group that these underlying, potentially disruptive forces begin to break from control, since pleasant compensation for impounding them is no longer available. This is the situation that can prevail under circumstances of culture conflict. Of such order is the situation now in various parts of the Arctic, notably in the Mackenzie Delta.

Certain patterns in the traditional culture which constituted foci of tension include the following:

1. Male dominance, inflation of the male ego, and depreciation of the female;
2. Female resentment of the male, and of the female role;
3. Impounding of hostile and competitive impulses.

These points of tension were little destructive of harmony so long as the old culture was intact. Now they are coming to the fore and seriously threatening the viability of Eskimo human relations.

Male dominance and depreciation of the female are related to a variety of reference points, deriving particularly from the basic condition that hunting is the sole means of subsistence, that the male must constantly validate himself as a provider, and that his pride and self-respect are to the highest degree dependent upon his capacities to prove his skill in competition with other males, and upon approval by females. Paradoxically, while the men have a high level of confidence in their abilities as providers, nevertheless fear of failure, anxiety about self-regard, and realistic awareness of the disastrous consequences of a poor hunting yield were constant threats to the male ego. It is submitted as an hypothesis that the Eskimo male required a good measure of ego support for maintenance of self-esteem in

¹For a prime example of this, see Kardiner's analysis of the Alorese (9).

spite of his skills as a provider. One powerful mode of ego support lies in a form of male solidarity in which the female is derogated and her role reduced in importance. This has been a major source of repressed conflict among Eskimos.

The female's resentment of the male and of her role is certainly directly related to the institution of male dominance as well as to the harshness of life for a woman on the tundra. A sharp example of her basic attitudes is implicit in the already discussed practice of giving away children. Certainly this practice goes far to help in group relations, but it is also reflective of the female's ambivalence toward her role.

Emergent from this disparity of status, and from other causes to be discussed shortly, is an implicit pattern of male fear and awe of the female. This mechanism is unconscious, but is amply illustrated by the folklore and religion in which evidence abounds of the power and dangerous qualities of female figures.

The two major deities are female: the one, the source of darkness, cold, ice, snowdrifts, and death from freezing and starvation; the other, benign, so long as proper taboos are maintained with regard to the hunt and disposition of game. The latter is known all over the Arctic by various names, among them Sedna, Nuliajuk, Pinga, or "The Big Dish". Despite her powers, in some stories Sedna is harpooned by a male hero who releases her after she begs for freedom. Here the male asserts his strength, even against this strong deity. The myth represents an example of the wishful desire of the male to triumph over the powerful female. The myth could not exist if the male had no implicit conflict about and fear of the female, with the concomitant need to support his ego by the illusion of power over her.

In various other major, ubiquitous hero tales, such as that of Qivioq, the male overcomes a variety of dangers involving females who are cannibalistic, murderous, sexually demanding and even castrative. Perhaps the most fearsome mythical creature on the tundra is a huge female, shaped like an egg, with one eye and a combination mouth and vagina, from which projects a huge foot on which she leaps with great bounds and paralyzes with fear any male who sees her. She then devours him.

Another widespread story involves a time of hunger, when a man and woman are eating one scrawny willow grouse. A child asks for some, the father tells the mother to feed the child, but she says she has already given it a foot. The child weeps and goes off hungry.

In the tale of Iggimarahugjuk, while a man is accused of cannibalizing and eating his children, his wife, who runs to her brothers for help, is thought by them to have eaten them herself. They cut her open and find no children in her, but a swarm of gnats flies from her abdomen and becomes the origin of flies and mosquitoes in the Arctic.

Where then do these attitudes about the woman take their origin, particularly in a culture in which the solicitude of the mother for her children and her kindness toward them is at as high a level as can be found in any society? Why and how does one who handles her role as mother so well become such a monster in the folktales? The following points may render the situation more intelligible:

1. Since food is often scarce and infants hungry, the mother is perceived as the depriver.
2. During the long period of closeness to the mother's body and frequent and prolonged breast-feeding, the basic oral incorporative fantasies of the infant could

be projected as a fear of being eaten by the mother. This mechanism, present in the dream and fantasy life of small children in many societies, especially our own, could likely be exacerbated in Eskimo society, where actual food shortage is attributed by the infant to the mother long before he is able to evaluate the true source of his hunger. Such mechanisms persist in the unconscious and could have been the matrix for stories invented by the original myth makers.

3. Since the mother is the source of what discipline there is in Eskimo families, she is viewed as the potentially dangerous figure.
4. She is actually exploited by the male both for work and for sex and denigrated at the same time. It is axiomatic that one will unconsciously fear and project a fearsome image of those whom he treats badly. The tradition of female denigration in this culture could add up easily to a projected image of the mistreated female as dangerous.
5. Prolonged infant care, while it enhances security and the potential for bonds of affection, helps at the same time to create a high degree of oral dependence upon the mother, with deep and prolonged wishes to remain cared for. At the same time there is marked enhancement of the need for female approval. Denial of this dependence, revelation of which could be embarrassing to the male ego, could take the form of male derision of the female role. It is of great significance that nothing could be more devastating to a male Eskimo than repudiation by his wife. It can be and is a major source of depression and suicide in the Eskimo male.

Of psychological importance to the current problems of the male subjects of this study is the existence of a paradoxical feature in the male character structure. These men exhibit a well-developed level of ability and capacity on the one hand and a proneness to depression on the other, with both stemming from the same source: good maternal care.

Another focus of tension and potential conflict formation in Eskimo society stemmed from the need to suppress, repress and control envy, rage, and acting out of hostile impulses. These emotional constellations have, of course, always been present, but were curbed and played down for the sake of group harmony and survival. Such controls, at the same time that they served well to hold down dissension, may have placed limitations on creativity and on the capacity for initiative in pursuing new ends. Self-assertion rather than self-effacement, together with envy and competition, serve in our culture as stimuli to action and the development of goals. Control over hostile and competitive impulses still persists as a valued culture trait, and may serve to hinder the Eskimo's capacity to adapt to the competitive needs of western culture.

On the land, evidences of underlying conflict associated with impounding of hostile and competitive impulses are expressed in the following ways:

1. Desire for individuation and personal expression led to absolute non-acceptance of formal leadership or authority on the part of any other male. If these desires did not exist, there would be no such strongly prohibitive custom.
2. There have been numerous instances of sudden violent outbursts, but generally without actual assault.
3. Depression and suicide have occurred, apparently as the result of guilt-laden, long impounded rage of one man against another. Sometimes a man would commit

murder under such conditions, but more likely, he would simply become depressed.

Suicide

There apparently is a high rate of suicide among Eskimos in the land culture and, while statistical studies are difficult, there are evidences of rates even higher than in countries such as Sweden. Balikci (1) estimates the rate to be several times that of the Swedish level.

In questioning 50 or 60 older Eskimos concerning precipitating causes for suicide, the following consensus appeared and, even if memory was not always accurate, the informants at the very least were presenting innocently their own conceptions of sources of depression and self-destruction, hence a compendium of what would be disturbing to them. Both sets of information are valuable and usable, especially since they concurred very closely. These were:

1. A man is too old to hunt. He is jealous of the younger men and hates his life. He wants to die.
2. A man is rejected and humiliated by his wife.
3. A widow without sons is badly treated, feels lonely, resentful of others and wants to die.
4. A father carelessly brought about the death of his child or was unable to provide food.
5. A man is driven out of the band for a major taboo violation, such as incest.
6. A man inadvertently causes the death of a near relative or friend.

These hypothetical situations posed by Eskimo informants suggest the kinds and courses of conflict implicit in the culture, including the degraded role of the aged, tensions in male-female relations, and strong shame and guilt potentials. Severe depression is a frequent symptom of conflict, and it is significant that most of these sources of depression have existed to a high degree in the land culture.

CHAPTER V

SOME RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SOCIAL PATHOLOGY AND ASPECTS OF BASIC PERSONALITY.

In conclusion, we shall examine some of the relationships between basic personality and aboriginal culture traits on the one hand and, on the other, the indications of social pathology which have been observed in the Mackenzie Delta, and discussed at length earlier in this report. It will be suggested that, in the present day social context of the Delta, certain of these personality and cultural traits tend to be dysfunctional or maladaptive. Again, there is evidence that some of the mechanisms for coping with potentials for conflict in the aboriginal culture are no longer operative, although these potentials continue to exist in the present, so that conflicts which once were merely implicit or submerged have now become released and overt. The consequences of these emerging conflicts are visible in the patterns of aberrance previously discussed, including excessive drinking, sexual promiscuity, acting out of aggressive impulses, role and self-image disturbances, maladaptive consequences of permissive child rearing in a town setting, and widespread depression and anxiety. Looking in more detail at the relationships between these patterns of aberrance and elements of Eskimo personality and culture, it will be convenient to treat males and females separately.

Males

Most males living in the settlements are at least partly dependent on welfare and very few earn a steady living, since permanent jobs are in short supply. Among these men there is a high incidence of severe sense of failure, accompanied by depression and massive drinking. Very few possess skills with which to compete with the white worker in his own world. The Eskimo is quite aware that most jobs available to him are temporary, generally of labourer level, and glaringly indicative of his lower status. It unfortunately must be added that often job opportunities go unfilled, and that very few have availed themselves of opportunities for training. Many men feel quite insecure at the bleakness of their future in the face of a constant shortage of permanent full-time jobs. Thus a major blow to male pride is an ever-present and ubiquitous sense of lost usefulness, of lost opportunity for self-validation as a family provider.

How much the model of the white world affects the Eskimo is borne out by the young men's attitude toward trapping, a potentially lucrative trade but one which they usually reject on the ground that it is low work and because "the white man thinks that's all a native can do".

Observing the fully employed white worker, comparing his status with his own, and, above all, suffering the huge blow to pride that is the inevitable product of the females' prime interest in white males, the Eskimo finds himself severely threatened at every level at which a man's pleasure and self-esteem rest. He cannot function in a setting for which he is not equipped either for social or vocational competition and, in many instances, his sexual potency seems to fail in fear of the powerful white adversary who is so attractive to the young women.

Many Eskimos feel a great deal of ambivalence toward the white man; some manage to function in his presence with their self-respect still relatively intact, while others

experience a sense of inferiority which they may express when drunk, at such times disparaging their own skin colour and uttering bitter comments about white prerogatives. There is a high level of anger in these men, especially in those whose work history is limited. In a more subtle sense, there is self-directed hatred based on awareness of a lowered self-image in comparison with the powerful white adversary who can come and go as he pleases, live where he pleases, and do what he wants. It appears that these men are incipiently ready to detest themselves for not being white, and this form of self-disparagement could become more serious if opportunities are not forthcoming for prideful work of more or less equal status with that performed by white men.

Many of the men who were interviewed in jail wore masks of jocularity, but showed symptoms of borderline or severe depression, relieved only by alcohol, and then only temporarily. These same symptoms appeared in others who drank just as much, but who had managed to stay out of trouble with the police.

As in so many other areas of the world, the search for quick relief from symptoms of depression involves the use of an anaesthetic and euphoriogenic drug, in this instance, alcohol. Such drugs relieve painful emotional states, raise the spirits, enhance self-confidence and inflate one's sense of power, thus creating an illusory expansion of the perception of the self as an omnipotent agent for attainment of goals. Since the effects on self-image and self-awareness are in the nature of illusions, there must be a point of reference in life history at which such a portrait of the self existed. This, of course, occurred early in life, in the setting of maternal affection and feeding, at a time when the psyche is all-engrossed in narcissistic self-contemplation and illusory belief that one is, so to speak, an omnipotent being with an omnipotent agent, the mother. It is within this context that the euphoric element in alcoholism takes its structure and finds its energy and then demands repetition and refueling. It is within this context, aside from intellectual clouding, that the drinker seems out of contact with us, as compared with the individual who imbibes smaller quantities for temporary relief of tension and without constant necessity for the drug. The heavy drinker is a greatly self-absorbed and narcissistic individual precisely because he seeks and finds the state of infantile nirvana, the prototype of the euphoria of breast-feeding and comfort from the mother.

A major element in depression is the sense of lost powers and, particularly, lost aid stemming from loss of dependent status in relation to maternal care. The primary and first great trauma suffered by any human in any culture, is the separation from maternal care, with the necessity of learning to shift for oneself by developing social and vocational skills and by identifying with the parent, ultimately deriving satisfaction not from being the child, but from assuming the socially respected role of producer and caretaker. All growth involves this internal psychological struggle between two orientations. On the one hand, there is the desire to remain the infant under loving, feeding maternal care, with gratifications sought via illusion and magical provision by other peoples' efforts. This is the pleasure principle of living. On the other hand, there is the necessity to discover the joys and satisfaction of being the provider of pleasure for the self through one's own faculties, and the pleasure of role attainment that accrues social rewards. This is the reality principle. In all of us the first state lies ready to come forth and appears in inverse proportion to our developed capacities for functioning realistically as adults. The greater the stress to which we are exposed, the greater the chance for failure and the awakening of the infantile groping for help and relief. By the same token, the greater the capacity for functioning in the face of stress, the higher the ability to overcome adversity, a power derived from realistic development of skills, and, hence the greater the capacity for pride and self-respect. In the latter instance, adversity is faced as a challenge and the individual rises with his resources against the stress, either triumphs or goes down with a sense of a battle well fought. . . . in both instances with no loss of self-respect.

The latter constellation depends upon two things, the development of proper tools through good parental care and education via the reward system, and, secondly, exposure to stresses no greater or more complex than the ambit of the equipment developed. If one is exposed to stresses outside his experience which demand correct solution in order to ward off disaster, the outcome may be failure, distress, anxiety, self-hatred, failing pride, diminished self-image, and an illusory and wishful desire to identify with those capable of functioning in the unfamiliar set of conditions.

Now, it is of major psychological importance that patterns of good child rearing make it possible for an individual to grow with developed capacities for self-governed performance and self-derived success. However, the same patterns, involving closeness to the mother, can also lay the groundwork for over-dependence, magical seeking for gratification through regression, and a potentiality for depression in the face of failure or rejection. Good child care, then, provides not only a base line for healthy growth, but also the determinants for regressive patterns of security-seeking in the face of failure. Eskimo society, with its excellent provisions for care and education of the child, is a remarkably good example of this state. In many ways, it must be noted, this state is similar to that in our own society and the observer should be careful to note similar patterns in the behaviour of individuals under stress in our own culture. The Eskimo is not at all unique in this respect, but is very much our counterpart. Faced with the pain of failure of his resources in coping with unfamiliar stress, the Eskimos resorts to alcohol for relief, just as does the white man.

The similarity is quite evident in the usual pattern of drunkenness as it progresses in an Eskimo, starting with affability, lifted spirits, some boasting, and, above all, omnipotent generosity. Finally, he passes out, sleeps it off, feels sheepish, states that he will never do it again, and goes back to the same performance when stress presses again.

While there are all grades and levels of drinking in the community, most of the drinking activity seems related to the incipience of the depressive mechanism. This is not to say that all Eskimos are depressive characters, but it is submitted that the prevailing patterns of child rearing and the strong guilt and shame systems that govern his self-image and ego ideal together predispose the Eskimo to greater depressive possibilities as characteristic modes of reaction to stress. Alcohol, with its strong euphoric potentials, helps him to control this state temporarily.

Another consequence of drinking, as suggested in the inhibition-releasing effects that stem from diminution of anxiety, is the release of rage. As previously noted, a major element of Eskimo character has been the strong control that shame and guilt exert over acting out of hostile impulses. The Eskimo tends to be an emotionally governed individual, generally turning his resentful responses to provocation inward against himself and thereby feeding depression. Alternatively, in individuals where such control becomes insufficient to handle the amount of rage-bound response, loss of control will involve violence, either direct or displaced. Such is the case with regard to some men (or women) who get drunk. Here the fuse is short, provocation is usually slight, and the pattern is one of violent assaultive behaviour.

The most significant observation that might be made with regard to violent acting out on the part of the Eskimo relates to the disparity between the true source of his rage and the recipient of its effects. The real enemy is the white man, successful at work, desired by Eskimo women, and standing as a living testament to the Eskimo's failure to adapt to a changing world. The tragic fact is that the angry man does not attack the feared and inflated white man, but rather displaces his rage onto another Eskimo, or an Indian, who is

actually a projection of his own disparaged and hated self-image. He lashes out at himself in the form of his own image in another.

Another observation about drinking is that the male in a number of documented instances drinks to restore or to support potency. About a dozen men well known to the author, suffer from varying degrees of potency disturbance when attempting intercourse, finding some measure of relief with alcohol. The incidence of potential sexual problems is of course impossible to rate, but it must be noted that the folklore is rife with anxiety about capacity and about threatening female figures. It is submitted that in the old culture the male was less likely to have to satisfy the female, but that this changed after exposure to western culture, in which a major pattern in the changing role and status of the female involves her growing awareness of sexual rights and insistence on orgasmic gratification. This has held the Western male up to the light of necessity for performance and has a good deal to do with male neurosis in our culture. It is unlikely that potency disturbances in males in the land culture represented an overt problem, firstly because the female was an object more for male gratification rather than for her own. Secondly, in a culture without sexual taboos in childhood or terrorizing sex education handed to children to prevent exercise of their curiosity, there was little likelihood of infringement upon capacity to function, for either male or female. One point of proof would lie in the institution of wife lending and exchange. It would seem very unlikely that males with potency problems would lend their wives to other males, thereby exposing themselves to comparison in performance. An impotent man is extremely jealous of his sexual prerogatives and certainly does not want his woman to find out that other men are better than he in the act.

However, with growing failure in other areas of functioning, social and vocational, the male's basic fear of the female and concern about his image in her eyes has been much enhanced (we have seen that these patterns were implicit in the old culture and evocative of the traditional patterns of support for and inflation of the male ego). These problems, coupled with his awareness of her growing preference for white males, have affected his whole concept of himself and are taking toll in all areas of his functioning, including the sexual.

For many men who seem to lack other interests, a common motive for drinking apparently is to ward off tedium. Among these people, drinking patterns usually involve much conviviality, generosity, and reckless spending. Given the condition of life of so many town dwelling Eskimos, drinking to avoid tedium is not necessarily an abnormal mode of behaviour, but may be reflective of emotional disturbance and social disorganization if pursued to excess. Furthermore, while generosity and conviviality may be salubrious enough in themselves, to use them as a means of warding off envy by spending all one's hard earned substance in a night's drinking with friends marks the pattern as bordering on social pathology, since it is inappropriate in the current setting of life.

Females

The problems of the young Eskimo woman of the Delta today vector about her sense of confusion with regard to identity, role, choice of love object, and sources of self-esteem. She experiences distortion of goals and disturbance in her formation of an appropriate concept of maturity, due to disruptions in parental aims and inappropriate models.

The male, if only in illusion, expresses the wish to validate himself by resorting to the values of the land and by functioning, therefore, as provider and head of a household. Even though he envies and fears the resourceful and technically superior white man, he basically

repudiates him and seeks to enhance his own self-image by identification with the portrait of a land Eskimo, with regard to role and function.

The young female functions far differently and shares none of the conscious or dimly valued notions of the male concerning identity as an Eskimo. She repudiates the land, the values and traditions of her parents and forebears, and in no way shapes her self-image in the forms of the past. Instead she strives to imitate the white female as a model, to identify with her ways and behaviour, her goals and social attitudes. For the female, far more than for the male, the white culture represents the desired plateau, the source of self-image, the ultimate in self recreation, and the pattern for identification. The point of departure for this re-emphasis of form of identity is a constricted portrait of the worth of her own cultural past, with parental models coming off a poor second in comparison with her illusion about the elevated status of the white community. Her perception of a new identity is rooted in the least enduring, most superficial of available patterns for imitation. She does not identify with the aims and goals of the more mature white woman, but rather with the accoutrements of white identity itself. In short, she wishes not in the least to be an Eskimo, prefers not to look like one, places high value on the physical attributes of whiteness and wishes to be white. This wish manifests itself in a variety of forms ranging from dress, manners, hairdos and makeup to much more subtle expressions of desire including repudiation of non-white males as love objects, the overt wish "to marry a white man and get out", and even the illusion that bearing a half-white child confers a certain distinction. The latter, in a variety of instances, as expressed through conscious fantasies and dreams, carries the illusion that such an infant in some way validates the mother's goal of whiteness.

It is quite apparent that the young Eskimo woman's emotional conflict is centred about her sense of inferiority. The important point is that her sense of inferiority stems not simply from the perception that she occupies a low position in a hierarchy of status, but also from a conviction about the inferiority of her own race and culture. Thus her inferiority feelings are more profound and potentially more damaging than would be the case if they were merely the product of status differentiation within a single cultural milieu. Of course these observations also apply to many Eskimo men but with somewhat less force, owing to the male's generally greater commitment to traditional cultural values.

It is not unrealistic to suggest, in company with other authors, that inter-ethnic relations in many northern settlements exhibit certain caste-like features which may function to instill in native people a negative self-image. In Inuvik, Eskimo perceptions of their own racial and cultural inferiority are reinforced, albeit inadvertently, by the fact that their homes are, for the most part, physically separated from those of the whites. Reinforcement is further accomplished by the attitudes and prejudices of many white individuals, whether overtly or covertly expressed, and sometimes quite independently of any malicious intent. It must be added, however, that certain important features characteristic of caste systems are absent from Inuvik, although this is not to say that some might not develop over time.

In the new social milieu, the male emerges a degraded figure because of vocational failure and loss of the validating qualities of his role on the land, and the female, comparing him with the "successful", self-confident, self-supporting white male, repudiates him both as a lover and as a husband. If the sources for this attitude of the woman were derived only from the external structure of economic and social stratification it would be enough, but the problem is tremendously overweighted and over-determined by a major factor of implicit conflict buried in the old culture, namely the fundamental female resentment of the male and of her secondary status in the old culture. Many young women (and here by young I mean from about 15 to 30) both at Inuvik and in the Keewatin

District, where contact with whites was much less and where many patterns of the old culture are still functional, have said almost literally, "I like the white man because he talks nicer". They speak here, of course, less of the actual gallantry of the white male (whose "nicer talk" is often reserved for the processes of seduction), but rather of the much higher status of the white female in her own culture and her attitudes toward males, from whom she will accept little less than equal status. In many interviews and personal contacts with young Eskimo women, the patterns of negativism expressed or acted out with regard to the young males were so striking as to condition the presentiment that this conflict in the character structure of the female constitutes perhaps the major potential source for breakdown of Eskimo culture.

The female in many instances, like the male, is on the edge of depression and tries to relieve it through drinking, with much the same motivational and psychodynamic significance as in the male. However, she employs another device for relief, unlike the male, embodying illusions implicit in her fundamental rejection of her role as an Eskimo. She seeks comfort through the regressive mode of searching for love, indulging in the fantasy that the man she sleeps with loves her. She is for a moment validated by the white male's acceptance of her. Being immature in her values and in her conception of role, she does not provide the emotional and attitudinal factors that go with responsible and mature love, but rather her aims are dependent, magical and self-validating. There was hardly a young female whom I interviewed (including pathological drinkers in jail) who did not to one degree or another harbour this illusionary complex of a dreamed-for happy future, romantically cloaked, and in terms of rescue by a white male. More often than not, her real experiences with white men bring severe disillusionment, often accompanied by depression.

The female, far more than the male, is trapped between two cultural patterns. Eskimos, in spite of Christian education, still do not place a low connotation on sex or pregnancy, but, on the other hand, a certain measure of guilt exists in the female far more than in the male. It is for this reason that sexual acting out by the female frequently involved imbibition of alcohol first.

Conclusion

It should, of course, be noted that hedonism has always been an implicit part of Eskimo culture and is the route to relief from tension in many cultures when an individual's goals and patterns for self-validation are confused, non-operational and immature. Unhappily, in a community dominated by western values and customs, acting out of this sort is not regarded with sympathy, or with much effort to understand its sources. Instead, it may be treated with contempt, veiled or open, and serve to widen the gap between Eskimos and whites.

One last comment on pathological patterns and potentials related to the system of permissive child rearing. We have noted already how well the system served in the educative processes of children on the land. In a town setting, however, especially with such a large number of parents on welfare and living disrupted lives markedly affected by excessive use of alcohol, such permissive rearing can be disastrous. In a setting of parental anomie, exposed to damaging influences of racial, ethnic, and status differentiations, children can scarcely be expected to develop goals other than those which are illusionary and hedonistic.

In summary, we note that various implicit conflict patterns have come to the fore and are evoking disruption and confusion in Eskimo values, human relations, self-awareness, and capacity for new adaptations. Most notable of all are the consequences of the falling

status of the male and the confused and self-destructive attitudes of the female toward him.

This report has emphasized and delineated pathology, perhaps at the risk of neglecting the positive features of Eskimo life today. A clinician tends to search for disease, since that is his essential function, but I consider that if anything, the pathology reported here has been understated rather than exaggerated. While all is not confusion in the Delta, many disruptive elements are at work. Some are the inevitable consequences of imposing, often with the best intentions, the culture of one group upon another. Others are the result of implicit conflict in the old culture itself. In the circumstances, it is hoped that a study such as this can have both diagnostic and predictive value.

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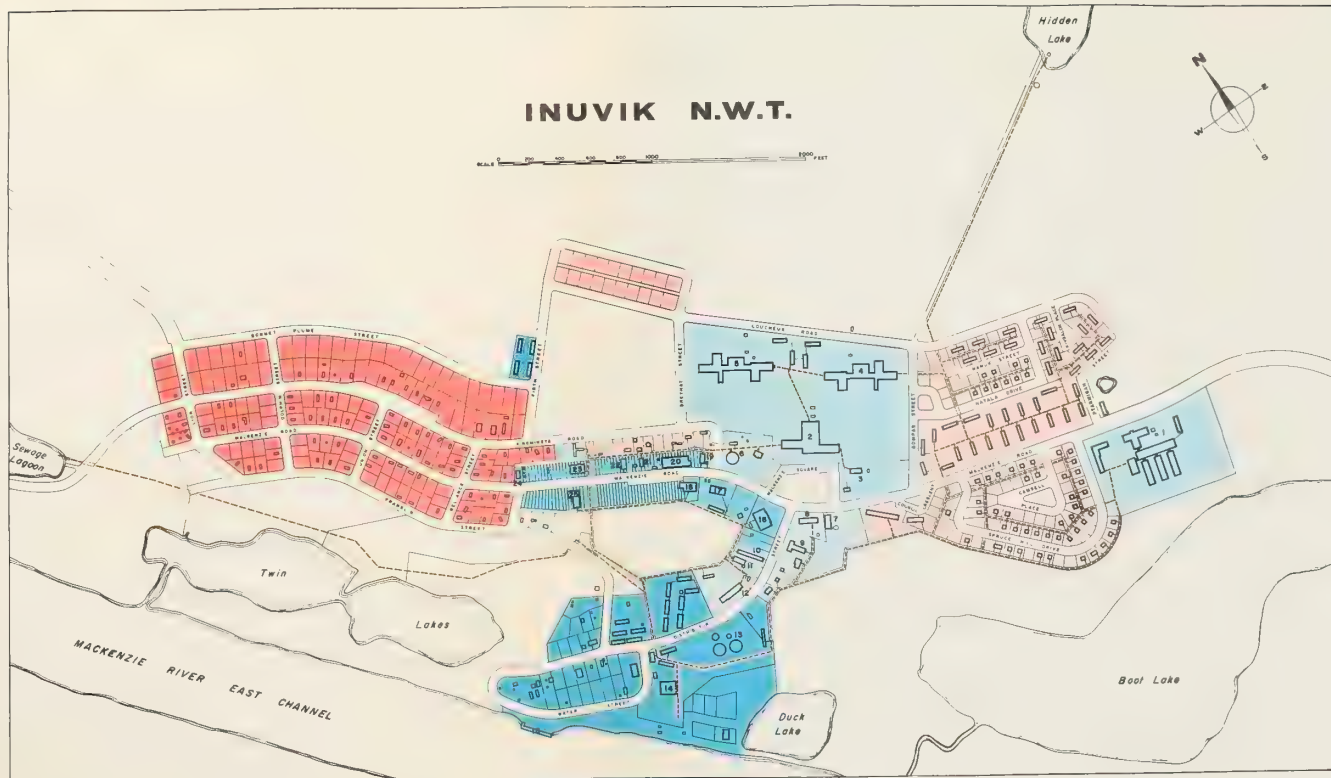
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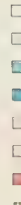
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INUUVIK, N.W.T.

LAND USE

- Government
- Institutional
- Commercial
- Industrial & Warehousing
- Serviced Government & Company Housing
- Co-operative Housing Development
- Unserviced Housing
- Utilidor



BUILDING IDENTIFICATION KEY

1. Hospital
2. School
3. Anglican Church
4. Anglican Hostel
5. R.C. Hostel
6. R.C. Church
7. Research Laboratory
8. Federal Building
9. R.C.M.P.
10. Curling Rink
11. Legion Hall
12. Navy
13. Oil Storage
14. N.C.P.C.
15. Dock
16. Hotel
17. Theatre
18. Cafe
19. Bakery
20. H.B.C. Dept. Store
21. C.N.T.
22. Bank
23. Liquor Store
24. Semmler's General Store
25. Laundry

Jan. 1966 Base map — Loates Associates (with revisions)

